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THE

EVE OF SAN-PIETRO.

A TALE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Ruin from Man is most conceal'd when near,
And sends the dreadful tidings in the blow!
Is this the flight of fancy? would it were!
Heaven's Sovereign saves all beings, but Himself,
That hideous sight—a NAKED HUMAN HEART!

YOUNG.

You've wrong'd me all, and on you all—but hold—
I form Revenge too mighty to be told!

OVID'S EPISTLES.

VOL. III.

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THE EVE OF SAN-PIETRO.

CHAP. I.

"The time, and my intents, are savage, wild;
"More fierce, and more inexorable far,
"Than empty tygers, on the roaring sea."

SHAKESPEARE.

FROM the instant he had perpetrated the dreadful deed, horror and consternation seemed to have stupified Morano; an universal shivering seized his whole frame, and the last mysterious words of Gradisca, struck like lightning on his soul; he had scarcely power to order Bernardo to conceal the body, and secure the woman in safety, when he darted from the chamber of

death, and regardless of the storm which beat with fury around him, pursued his way towards the Convent of Zanotti; fearful as an infant, and trembling as a woman, he dared hardly to look, or to respire; if he raised his eyes upwards, Heaven seemed to open in wrath and justice; if he cast them on the ground, the verdure was stained with gore; murder and injury were written upon every leaf.

"MINE!" the offspring of me and Juliana!" he exclaimed, as hastily he pulled the Convent bell, and demanded of the porter for Zanotti.

"HE sleeps within his cell yonder," replied the man, regarding him with some inquisitiveness; "and it is so rarely that he does sleep, Signior, that I do not much like to disturb him."

THE light, which now reflected strongly on his person, shewed to Morano some spots of blood on his vesture; this, together with the impatience he felt to see Zanotti, almost threw him off his guard.

"KNOW you not," he cried, haughtily addressing the porter, "that the Marchese di"——He could not go on, he blushed at the mention of his dishonoured name, and in moderated accents said, "his business was of the utmost importance, and demanded instant egress to the Abbate."

"PROCEED, then," replied the other, again glancing a look of suspicion on his garment, "through that long winding passage, turn to the right, and you will find the Father Zanotti in his cell."

On Zanotti now rested the last hope of the guilty and apprehensive Marchese; yet, strange to say, on the dissolution of that very man, lay, to his conscious mind, the most certain prospect of safety and security: the door of the cell soon gave way to his exertions, and for the first time in his life shewed him the wary, the circumspect Zanotti, in his power; that dreaded enemy, though his bosom's counsellor, that watchful, restless spirit, that subtle Zanotti, that mysterious Ubaldo! buried in slumber and insensibility before him. Morano gasped for breath; suggestions, dark and infernal, beat strongly at his heart; while the single taper, which glimmered in the apartment, only served to increase those suggestions, by strengthening, through the gloominess of the chamber, the black representations of his own thoughts.

thoughts. Across the mattrass lay Zanotti; the book he had been reading was yet open in his hand on a passage wherein the misguided author treated of the soul's annihilation. His cowl was thrown quite off his forehead, his brows were strongly knit together, and a peculiar cast of the mouth forcibly recalled that expression which had marked the early features of Ubaldo; but—oh God! what were the sensations of the Marchese, when on the table before him stood that same trunk, open, and full of papers, which, at an early period of this history, had occasioned him so much agitation; he flew towards it; one daring hand instinctively grasped at its contents, while the other, trembling between fear and resolution, groped unconsciously within his bosom:—Before him lay Ubaldo, unarmed, and sleep-

ing; that hidden and powerful master of his fate, the possessor of his dearest secret; and the man whom of all others he most feared and hated; and beside him were the means of, perhaps, unravelling a mystery, which, for so many years, had stood the test both of public investigation and private enquiry; and one blow, one well-directed aim, would rid him for ever of the one, and secure to him the other; while the gradations of vice and iniquity had been so constant and progressive within his mind, that murder was now become familiar to it; and he who had once resolved upon one assassination, now did not hesitate in the perpetration of another. The slumber of Zanotti was heavy; and it seemed as though the violent exertion of years had submitted to the soft influence of Nature; for a sigh, deep, laboured, and long repressed,

sed, burst convulsively from the tough and flinty bosom, which had hitherto appeared incapable of harbouring it.

"Be that sigh eternal," inwardly repeated Morano, drawing the poniard from under his garment; involuntarily he gazed upon it, while his hand leant forcibly on the trunk; it was yet wet with the blood of Lorenzo.

"Hellish fiend!" he exclaimed, moving towards him, but for thee, it had now been pure, been spotless; but for thy pernicious doctrines, thy accursed arts, I had still been guiltless, still been"——

"De Cleance," murmured Zanotti, while his whole body seemed shaken by the vapours of his sleeping fancy,

"where is thy daughter now? Parent—Paulina!"

"MORANO shuddered; madness rushed on his brain; guilt and wretchedness curdled through his veins; he darted on him; raised his arm—but the violence with which he did it shook the trunk; it fell from its support; Zanotti awakened from his dream, and beheld the Marchese prostrate in agony at his feet.

"VILE miscreant!" he exclaimed, while his whole form looked more than human.

"VILE deceiver! thou hast sealed the doom which long has been impending over thy head. Hast thou forgotten the Eve of San Pietro? Weak Moraldi,

Moraldi, hast thou forgotten, that the day which saw thee set thy hand against me, was to hurl down ruin on thy house and thee?"

"UBALDO," replied the Marchese, in a voice trembling between rage and apprehension, yet striving to appear composed and collected, "it were folly, to waste these precious moments in useless recrimination, or by a vain and idle jealousy to break that league on which must now depend our mutual safety:—

"HEAR me," he continued, for a smile of indignant contempt, and the hasty stride with which he measured the boundary of the cell, proved the impatience of Zanotti; "hear me acknowledge that my life, my happiness,

my reputation, are now within your power; that"——

"THEY have ever been so," interrupted Zanotti proudly; and that the murderer of de Cleance was a slave as abject, as is now the premeditated assassin of Ubaldo!"

"AND is it for Ubaldo thus to mock the miseries he has caused, to reproach the conduct he has instigated!" exclaimed Morano, in accents of the bitterest anguish——"No," he added, while the drops of agony started to his forehead, and his frenzied eye gazed wildly on his blood-stained hands, "*I* have not forgotten the Eve of San Pietro, neither have I, that the man who now dares to insult me, that the man to whom I now vainly

sue for life and preservation, owes both to me: that though cloaked in mystery, branded with suspicion, scorned by the world, and driven from society, I yet rescued and protected thee; unfriended, and unfortuned, I supported thee; raised thee from ruin, to honour and prosperity: thou, to whose insidious counsels I am indebted for all my sufferings, and for all my crimes; the deluder of my youth, the betrayer of my peace, the subtle fiend sent by my envious fate, to blight my prospects, and to crush my hopes: yet, not content with these, thou now dost sum up all with black ingratitude, to sting the tortured bosom which gave thee shelter.

"Morano," replied Zanotti, in a calm and steady tone, "I had thought, that when on San Pietro's Eve we

formed a compact of interest and policy, that the tie which bound thee to me then, was in its nature alone sufficient to preclude all ideas of gratitude, or of tenderness: Thou wert then a murderer; and I, (whether by chance or by design,) was privy to the deed. That I was the deluder of thy youth, or the evil counsellor of thy conduct, that very deed denies: for, was it I who led thee to embrue thy hands in the blood of the virtuous de Cleance? No—thine own passions, thy vices, and thy treachery! Was it I who bade thee slay the good Bertoldo? No—thine own ambitious, jealous, envious heart, which could not brook his happiness or superiority! Wert thou unschooled in crimes, unpractised in iniquity, when first I knew thee? No—I found thee, though young in years, yet old in wickedness, skilled in de-

ception, hackneyd in depravity: I viewed thee fitted to my purpose, and marked thee for my prey: the object of that purpose thou hast still to learn; but yet a few days, and all shall be completed; yet a few days, and thou shalt know me for what I am: for the preservation and protection which thou hast hitherto so generously afforded me," he added ironically, "I should have been bound to thee, had I not known, that in saving *my* life, thou didst regard it as the surest preservative of thine own. That I was unfriended, and unfortuned, is most true; but it is as true also, that friends I despised, and that wealth I disregarded; for know, Morano, though by Nature marked the jest of fortune, and the sport of circumstance, Art reared the foundling with a parent's care, and made mankind my victim and my prey."

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He now approached the door.—"Stay!" cried the frantic Marchese, "yet a moment longer, and take a life of horror and despair; for once, Ubaldo, be merciful in thy vengeance, and save me from a public and disgraceful death: Oh! but for thee, he cried, after a short pause, striking in agony his bosom, Lorenzo yet were living! One word from thee had made me spare Bertoldo!

"Poor abject wretch!" replied Zanotti, regarding him with stern composure, "I will not take thy loathed and hated being, for that indeed were mercy; but I will reserve thee to such lingering miseries, such unheard of sufferings, as only thou deservest! Peruse those papers," he continued, "they are not those you once saw; they were the records of *my* hidden fate;

fate; these will teach you to curse *yours*! Mark them well, Morano,—they cannot sink you lower than you are, or avert the blow, which now I haste to strike!"——Saying this, he wrapped his garments round him, past the door of the cell, and was seen no longer.

It is now requisite we should recur to incidents in the early life of Morano, not yet explained. When first emerging from the bosom of his family, and regardless of their entreaties, he threw off the yoke of parental authority, and became, by an early initiation into habits of profligacy and licentiousness, an abandoned and irreclaimable character, at an age when few men have any characters at all. It is possible, that the radical evil of an erroneous education might have had

had some influence in fixing his vicious propensities; and that weak indulgence, which failed in its ill effects on the natural good heart of Bertoldo, strengthened the perverse inclinations of Moraldi's disposition.

The old Marchese di Albenza had, in the days of his youth, been a gay and dissipated man; yet, though not possessed of a very superior understanding, he had just sense enough to perceive its pernicious consequences, and to shrink from the dangers it threatened. Not, however, before his peace and constitution became severely impaired, did he awake from an infatuation, which left him the prey of disease, and the victim of unceasing regret; while a marriage, contracted at the instigation of his family, to re-establish a fortune his own imprudencies

dencies had much injured, in uniting him to a woman he never loved, deprived him for ever of inward joy and domestic comfort. To all, therefore, who visited at the castle, he appeared to be a disappointed man; to those who witnessed his hours of privacy, he was a miserable one. Exclusive of the death of his wife, his children alone possessed the charm of beguiling the gloom and monotony of his life; and to the excessive fondness he indulged in towards them, may be ascribed, as has before been said, most of their future misfortunes. Many years, however, did not elapse, before he had reason to give Bertoldo the decided preference, — a preference rewarded with every mark of dutiful attention and filial piety, till that period when the worn-out and suffering Marchese resigned his soul into the hands

of

of his Maker. In the solemn hour of expected dissolution, the conduct of his youngest son pressed heavy on his spirits, and filled him with sad presentiments; many times he tried to speak, and unburthen his mind of a weight that seemed to oppress him, but it was not to be; from the moment of his danger, articulation fled, and he expired, after lingering three days, without uttering a word.

The various pursuits which marked the lives of his children, at that time, and the different effects produced on them, by the death of their father, have already been related. Bertoldo lamented him with unfeigned sorrow; while Moraldi, engrossed with ambitious projects on the one side, and guilty apprehensions on the other, scarcely remembered that he had ever existed.

existed. The cause of those guilty apprehensions was, however, to fix his fate in life; as the first indulgence of one depraved inclination was, as is ever the case, to beget a thousand other baneful and destructive passions, of which, sooner or later, we inevitably sink the victims.

It was in the church of San Marco, that Moraldi was struck by the beauty of one of the loveliest girls he thought he had ever before beheld. She had been at matins; and the dignified venerable man, who leant feebly on her arm, only served to increase her charms; and the interest with which she seemed to inspire every beholder; of extreme youth, health, peace, and innocence, bloomed fresher than the rose upon her cheek; love and ingenuousness beamed in her soft dark eye;

eye; a quantity of fine hair shaded one of the fairest foreheads, and clearest brows, that ever formed perfection; while the graceful movement of her finely proportioned figure, gave elegance to the simple garb that veiled her symmetry. Moraldi had observed her during the ceremony, had watched the looks of tenderness she had cast on her father, (for so he concluded him to be,) had gazed with rapture on the turns of her sweet countenance, as she raised them from her father to her God; in short, he gazed till he admired, admired till he loved, if that sentiment can be called love, which exists in the bosom of a selfish and a licentious man. The service ended, she drew her veil over her face, and carefully supporting her father, descended the steps of the portico, and passing through several bye streets, took the road directly from the

the city. Determined, however, to discover her name and abode, Moraldi followed, trusting to his good fortune for some incident that might serve to introduce him to their notice; a thousand times he was on the point of speaking, but, if the homeliness of their apparel warranted the liberty he was about to take, the superiority of their appearance awed and deterred him. Frequently they stopped, for the old man seemed to experience pain and inconvenience from the fatigue of walking; and it was in one of these interruptions, that Moraldi first caught the interesting voice of the girl, as she soothingly addressed her companion, in the French language: "We shall now soon be at home, my dearest father!" she exclaimed, pressing a pale emaciated hand between hers; "do try, therefore, and walk a little further."

"I WILL,

"I WILL, my child," replied the stranger, raising himself feebly from the ground, on which he had rested; "but indeed my Eloise, I can undertake this journey no more; it is too much for me."

MORALDI, who had kept aloof during this conversation, and concealed himself near a clump of trees, close behind them, now approached, and with an ingenuousness and candour he knew so well how to assume, offered his arm to support him.

"YOUNG man," said the stranger, laying his hand upon his shoulder, while a look of dignified sorrow marked each expressive feature, "I will accept your offer, with gratitude; long is it since the sounds of sympathy and commiseration have reached *my* ears;

ears; you *shall* assist me to my cottage, and Eloise shall thank you for her father."

Moraldi was delighted; and the gentle Eloise raising towards him a blushing look of gratitude and tenderness, flew before, to prepare the cottage for their reception. After a visit, which lasted three hours, they parted, mutually pleased with each other; all the information, however, that Moraldi could gain as to the situation of his new acquaintance, was, that they were French; their names de Cleance; and that they had been driven, by unforeseen misfortunes, to seek an asylum in Italy, where they subsisted, by dint of the utmost frugality, on the scanty store saved out of the wreck of their fortunes: this pittance he found, also, was much

much increased by the exertions of Eloise, who, educated in the most finished manner by her father, possessed an uncommon fund of information, and now industriously turned those accomplishments to the support and comfort of the parent she adored. That they were of rank, expressions accidentally dropt by de Cleance left him not a doubt; but who they really were, was a confidence he never could obtain. Nor could he ascertain whether or not he had a son, a circumstance he had also been induced to conjecture: as it was, a great mystery hung over them, and grief, more than infirmity, seemed to be hastening the excellent de Cleance to his grave. Yet, alas! not all his former sorrows were sufficient to ensure him from the yet greater calamities that were in store for him: under the assumed name

of

of Marinari, Moraldi became a constant and welcome guest; and under the guise of friendship, under the semblance of goodness and honour, engaged the esteem of de Cleance, and the love of his innocent child; ere alive to her danger, she became the victim of an ardent, and as she herself imagined, hopeless affection; for the artful seducer, while he appeared unable to disguise the sentiments with which she had inspired him, hinted at peculiarities in his situation which restrained his inclinations, and doomed him to misery and despair. From this period, the once peaceful dwelling of de Cleance became the abode of gloom and discontent; the note of Eloise was heard no longer; her music was neglected, her drawings torn and effaced, and all her hours past in tracing each step of the path where she had

first seen Moraldi, in musing on his image when away, in watching each expression of his countenance when with her.

Unfortunate de Cleance! not all thy wrongs, not all thy sorrows, had been sufficient to guard thee against that treachery and deception, of which the liberal and noble mind too generally becomes the prey: generous, open, and believing, not all thy miseries had taught thee suspicion; had taught thee that the serpent, while fostering in the bosom of a father, will oftimes strike his deadliest poison at the heart of his offspring: Not till too late did he observe the alteration in his child; not till too late did he bitterly repent his ill-judged confidence, or perceive, with sensations of the keenest agony, that her peace was for ever fled; and that the efforts she made

made to appear chearful in his presence, only served to prove how far all chearfulness was banished. While these sentiments were passing in the breasts of the father and daughter, the artful Moraldi was laying deep plots for their ruin, and his own success. To have made an honourable tender of his hand to Eloise, lovely and amiable as she was, would have been absurd! What! the handsome, the noble, the admired di Albenza, deprive himself of liberty, shackle himself for life to an obscure girl, whom a little address and perseverance would easily obtain on his own terms: or, embarrassed and impoverished as he was, matrimony must be the last resource of his necessities. Still he continued his visits at the cottage; and while he lamented his hard fate, (which, as di Marinari, bound him a dependant on the will of a capricious

father,) he increased in his vows of adoration and attachment. De Cleance, who was no stranger to all that passed, and who every day grew more weak and infirm, did not discourage their meetings, because, in all the fondness of a partial parent, he trusted the beauty and merits of his daughter would at length secure her a protector in the man he distinguished and esteemed, and in whom he constantly discovered fresh and unequivocal proofs of affection towards her. While de Cleance lived, however, Moraldi was well aware Eloise never could be his; for poor and reduced as was his condition, he knew his soul to be the proud seat of honour, and that the almost expiring embers of latent courage, would be rekindled to punish the betrayer of his child. He was the more fully convinced of this; for, after passing a whole

whole morning in the company of Eloise, he was met on his departure at the door by de Cleance, who, when he had coolly and dispassionately represented the impropriety there would be in a continuance of his present conduct, ingenuously told him, that he must either desist from his visits, or publicly and openly avow his motives for proceeding in them. Moraldi, unprepared for the attack, and entirely thrown off his guard by the decisive manner of de Cleance, cast his eyes on the ground, and was at a loss for a reply; then muttered something about "his respect for him, his admiration of Eloise, his wishes, his attachment; but he went no further; his answer was cowardly and evasive; and at the moment truth and conviction flashed on the high mind of de Cleance, he

spurned him from his dwelling in silence and contempt.

" He is unworthy of you, my child, my darling!" exclaimed the generous father, as he clasped the sorrowing Eloise to his bosom; he is a villain! has betrayed my confidence, has deceived you! yet still I thank Thee, Providence," he added, while a ray of transient pleasure lightened up his pensive aspect, " that though I die the victim of perfidy and duplicity, I am still deceived, I never was the deceiver!" He was a villain! but alas! this was no balm to the wound that villainy had inflicted; nor had the sober admonitions of reason, power to efface impressions, nursed in solitude and retirement by a generous and enthusiastic mind; her love was as unalterable as it had been pure and sincere,

and

and the consciousness of her lover's falsehood, only served to add venom to the canker which was daily feeding on the sap of her existence. In the interim, Moraldi was actuated by every feeling of rage and mortification; and to that passion, which opposition had but tended to increase, was now added hatred and indignation towards de Cleance, whom he viewed as the insurmountable barrier between him and his wishes; and with a diabolical resolution, which was strengthened by the advice of his infamous servant and tool Corvino, he determined to rid himself at once, of the man whose kindness and hospitality were both sunk in the idea that he had dared to chastise and frustrate his designs. An exile, and a foreigner, who would revenge his cause, or discover his assassin? Eloise would be his prize, and

a sum of money, with large promises of future support and preferment, were to be the perpetrator Corvino's: in effect, the scheme was but too well laid, but too well executed; and it must appear an extraordinary concatenation of events, that it was on the fatal Eve of San Pietro, when fate closed the life and sufferings of the unhappy de Cleance; for, after returning from a solitary evening's walk, where the beauty of the weather had tempted him to ramble farther than was his wonted custom, he received a poniard at his heart; and ere his eyes could distinguish his murderer, his spirit fled, and death sealed them up for ever.

Eloise, in the mean time, had prepared their frugal repast; and having placed the room in order against her father's

father's return, seated herself by the lattice, and with her eyes unconsciously rivetted on the distant prospect, continued to meditate and reflect, till the approach of darkness recalled her scattered ideas, and reminded her of her father. It was much beyond his usual hour; yet, as the evening was mild and refreshing, he might have been induced to stray beyond his customary bounds; the distant convent-bell, however, chiming another half hour, filled her with alarm and uneasiness. She looked from the window, but saw him not; she listened at the gate, but the sound of his well-known footstep struck not on her ear; half distracted, yet unknowing whither to seek him, she tied on her hat, and having dispatched the servant one way, was preparing herself to leave the cottage, when something like a litter,

borne by two men, chained her in horror to the spot. They approached; their air and habits were familiar to her; and in a few minutes the glimmering light they held, shewed the well remembered features of Moraldi. A sickening sensation struck cold to her heart. "My father! Oh, my father!" was all she uttered, as tottering to the door, she fell against its porch. Moraldi instantly raised and bore her into the apartment, while Corvino deposited the still bleeding body on the bed. When somewhat restored to sense and composure, the former related, in the most tender and delicate manner, the particulars of the sad accident which, he said, had once more brought him under that roof, from whence the harsh commands of her father had severely banished him. With well dissembled tears of sympathy

thy and distress he entered into her sorrows, assured her, through the world he would protect her, against all the ills of life he would be her guardian and defence. He then proceeded to inform her, that from the time de Cleance had forbidden his visits he had unceasingly hovered round the spot where she resided; and while his honour recoiled from urging her to see him privately, his only consolation was in breathing the air she respired, in tracing the path she had imprinted; that this evening he had wandered through the roads leading to the cottage, and hearing suddenly the cry of distress, had flown to the place from whence it issued, just time enough to receive the last sigh of the murdered de Cleance. "In death," however, continued the villain, "he did me justice; for he bade me comfort and pro-

tect his daughter. His torn and mutilated garments convinced me he had fallen a sacrifice to some mercenary and remorseless plunderer, whom his gallant resistance had incensed. Most opportunely, Corvino, whom I had desired to bring my letters from the city, came up with me at this moment, and assisted to convey home his beloved and ever-to-be-regretted remains." He stopt; a low howling of the wind sounded like the last deep groan of the dying de Cleance, and struck fearfully to his conscience. In the proper time the body of this unfortunate man was interred in the cemetery of the adjacent monastery; but his memory long was cherished in the bosom of his hapless offspring.

For some months after his decease the visits of Moraldi were seldom and respect-

respectful; and, with the most delicate insinuations, he seemed tenacious lest any indulgence of his own should prove destructive to the honour of her, "whose fame," he declared, "was dearer to him than existence." When with her, he spent hours in eulogiums on the character of her lost parent; but forbore (though every enraptured look gave testimony to the tenderness of his feelings) to mention the subject of his love, lest he should alarm and distress her.

THAT these respectful and insinuating attentions should not daily gain ground upon a heart, already prepossessed in his favour, would be unnatural and improbable; when we consider, too, that that heart was a solitary one; and that in Moraldi, Eloise beheld her only friend, her only companion; the

mind must be hard, indeed, which could blame a sentiment the most rigid censurer would have pitied and deplored. Destitute of relative ties, confined in circumstances, reared in solitude, and wholly unacquainted with the world, let the breath of extenuation wave lightly over her errors, and repel the ruder blast, which too often nips the blossoms of contrition and amendment. Her heart was innately virtuous, but her imagination ardent, and herself too much the child of nature and sincerity to distrust the want of it in another; till acquainted with Moraldi, all the tenderness of her disposition had centered in her father; with him she had quitted France; and from him had acquired every instructive lesson, save that of conquering those feelings, and acquiring that penetration, to the want of which he had owed all his own calamities

lamities and sufferings. Deprived by a dreadful accident of this parent, and thrown entirely on the protection of the man she loved, without one other being to advise or counsel her, whither could she go?

It was now she was on the point of betraying to him the secret of her name and origin; it was now she would have implored him to seek that brother, who wandered an alien through the world. Yet, dared she do this? Dared she break the promise long since ratified to her father, never to discover the real history of her family? Conscious of the impropriety of her present situation, yet unknowing where to seek another; fearing to admit Moraldi, yet bereft and wretched when he did not appear, she became at length the suitor, and besought him to fulfil those vows

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he had so long and so fervently protested. Now, then, was his moment to triumph; he knew his power, grew indifferent in manner, less frequent in his visits, and cool in his professions. Eloise was petrified; in vain she reasoned, argued, reflected; in vain pride and indignation were summoned to her aid; love, tenderness, and misery, too strongly combated; she entreated his return; she became the victim of his perfidy.

From that fatal period peace and satisfaction were for ever banished the breast of this unfortunate woman; she awoke from her fleeting dream of happiness to convictions that harrowed and confounded her. A few short months not only brought her to the keenest sense of her own disgrace, but proved, that he, for whom she had forfeited

feited innocence, character, respectability, was indeed a villain; and that the man, whose idea had become engrafted with her very existence, whom she had loved with all the purity and tenderness of an unadulterated heart, whose artful insinuations had created the warmest interest in her breast, was unworthy, and had deceived her; was the reverse of the character he had assumed, and her credulous imagination had believed: yet, while the sad assurance doomed her days to sorrow and her nights to misery, her keenest pang was in the sense of *his* crimes, as her earliest prayer, her latest supplication, was for his amendment and repentance; and while anxiety for the dreadful fate to which she foresaw his vices must in the end reduce him, rent her bosom, a placid consolation followed

lowed her orisons, as she exclaimed, in the words of her father, "I thank Thee, Providence, I am the deceived, and not the deceiver! Fill up, oh my God! the measure of my anguish to the brink; I have deserved it all! I will raise the cup to my lips without a murmur."

She reproached him not with ingratitude; for, could the baseness of his conduct be to her sensible and naturally delicate mind any extenuation of her own? She asked him not to marry her; for, though the performance of a church ceremony might restore her to the prostituted opinion of the world, it could not ensure the pardon of an offended Maker, or recall the approbation of her own heart, for ever forfeited and for ever fled. To

his

his desire, that she would receive the society he wished to introduce to her acquaintance, she mildly intreated he would leave her to her sorrows and her repentance; but to his command, that she should do so, she submitted in silence to her fate. Ah! how often, when the noise of revelry, the shouts of intoxication, and the language of profane libertinism, have shocked her ears, would she not have joyfully exchanged her splendid jewels, and her costly villa, for the humblest garb, the lowest hovel virtuous poverty could have afforded! But whither can the humble child of error seek a refuge? While effrontive vice basks in the sunshine of prosperity, every door is barred against the timid and repentant sinner; custom and opinion, the despotic usurpers of pity and humanity, are contaminated by her presence, and she sinks the prey

of

of despairing guilt, because the hand of charity is withheld by the fear of censure.

In the space of two years she became the mother of a male infant, who lived not long to be her consolation, and by this time the fortunes of Moraldi were arrived at so desperate a state, that it was absolutely necessary he should form some plan for their speedy re-establishment. That of marriage offered as the readiest prospect of success; yet, notwithstanding his repeated inconstancies, as far as his selfish nature was capable of attachment, that attachment had rested on Eloise de Cleance; and the idea of losing her at this time, which he knew must be the case, were she informed of his marriage, was one he could not easily reconcile. So wonderfully interwoven had been every link in the chain of his

eventful

eventful life, that his first meeting with Ubaldo (a meeting planned and concerted by the latter) had taken place on the day twelvemonths from the murder of de Cleance; a meeting, which convinced him, that his diabolical secret was in the possession of another, and himself for ever in the power of a man, as dangerous as he was determined. Horror-struck at the assurance, and wholly at a loss to account by what natural means Ubaldo had obtained a knowledge of the circumstance; the hour and his own conscience so completely got the better of his usually undaunted spirit, that he submitted as to a being of immortal agency. That Corvino had betrayed him, he considered as highly improbable; he had proved him tried and faithful; and that he should desert him, and in him his own interest and future provision, for a

stranger,

stranger, an adventurer, without friends or resources, was not likely.

Not long, however, did he remain in doubt as to the means by which Ubaldo had discovered the murder of de Cleance; for the unexpected sight of the dagger on *his* table caused him instantly to interrogate Corvino, who, after some hesitation, confessed that the poniard he had given him to execute the dreadful deed, had in the scuffle fallen to the ground; and when on recollection he returned to seek it, was no where to be found. It was now therefore beyond all doubt that he was, and must ever remain, the slave of Ubaldo; he held 'a damning proof' against him, and consequently had it at all times in his power to bring him to a disgraceful and ignominious death. To what end he had obtained that power,

or

or why he should have singled him out as the object of his particular persecutions, was a point that had bewildered him through life; for vain were his enquiries, fruitless all his endeavours to discover the origin, history, or connexions of this wonderful man.

When he had first entered on his career at Naples, and his seductive manners and imposing address gained him access to the best societies, the general question had been, Who is he, and from whence does he come? but none could answer; and such was the proud dignity of his deportment, that the personal interrogatory was ever checked by the fear of offending, or losing an inmate, whose wit and conversation spread an irresistible fascination wherever he displayed it. Time, however, whose progress, though slow, is certain,

at length betrayed, that Ubaldo had supported himself by play; and that he had more than once been detected in practising unfair means, to ensure that success which invariably attended him; while his close connexion with Morano, and his evident increase of expense, from the period it commenced, finally served to injure the fame of the Marchese, and debase his own, in the public estimation, who could not but despise and condemn a character, which, gifted with understanding, and endowed with talents, yet descended to a base and ignominious dependance, and raised on the vices or weakness of another an eternal trophy to their mutual infamy and disgrace. That there was some hidden cause for his intimacy and power over the Marchese, became the general opinion; and as suspicion was now

marked

marked on every countenance, and a report universally circulated, that Ubaldo was privy to, if not concerned in, some dark transactions of his patron's life; he had sufficient penetration, timely to retreat from those parties, whence he foresaw he would soon have been openly expelled. Thus deprived of many quondam resources, it became doubly necessary to forward the fortunes of his victim; and to this end, a marriage with the wealthy Juliana di Morano was planned and concluded; while the unhappy Eloise, daily declining in health and spirits, readily accepted the offer of Moraldi, to remove to a small retired cottage he had purchased some miles from the city, alledging, that a reduction of his expenses was absolutely necessary; though, in reality, it was only to keep her from the knowledge of the Morano family. It

was in the course of the five years after his nuptials with Juliana were solemnized, that Ubaldo being openly accused at the gaming table, by his adversary, of false play, a violent scuffle ensued, when the former, mad with rage and mortification, drew a stiletto he always carried in his bosom, and by one skilful, though treacherous blow, soon proved the death of the unfortunate being, who had dared to contend with so powerful and perfidious an antagonist. The moment he fell, Ubaldo made towards the door; but here, for once, his usual good fortune forsook him; he was seized, hurried to prison, and the fact of murder being incontrovertibly proved, condemned to die! Now, therefore, was the time to exert his influence over the Marchese.

"Remember,

"REMEMBER, Moraldi!" he wrote, the day preceding that appointed for his execution, "your hitherto weak exertions in my favour, are not sufficient to counteract my designs, or frustrate my intentions with respect to you. Remember the Eve of San Pietro! remember, one path, however narrow, must be our mutual way through life; fly then! save me from my impending fate! or to-morrow's dawn, that witnesses my death, seals the doom of the Marchese di Morano!"

WITH every mingled sensation of horror and dismay, did the wretched Marchese peruse this letter. How to succour him he knew not; all his interest at court had been exerted to no effect; money would be useless; stratagem, therefore, was his only

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hope, and one night, the short space allotted to save him from destruction. The prison in which Ubaldo was confined, was a building of very ancient structure, and used, in former days, for the purposes of fortification; the variety of cells, concealed passages, and stupendous height of the whole, at length, however, induced the legislature to have it repaired, and formed into a prison for criminals convicted of capital offences; and in a dark and loathsome dungeon, at the very summit of one of its towers, lay extended, on his bed of straw, the once prosperous and admired Ubaldo; a small grated window, looking over a river, which flowed round that part of the edifice, made it hopeless for him to think of escape; and he watched the setting of the sun, and the approach of night, without gaining any tidings of the

the Marchese, or foreseeing the smallest prospect of deliverance. The sums with which he was constantly and amply supplied by Morano, had, however, secured to him two advantages: his letter had been safely conveyed, and the gaoler, dazzled by the profuseness of his offers, and trusting in the security of the cell, had consented to remove the heavy chains which manacled his limbs. Now he traversed the narrow boundary of his dungeon! now he raved in execration on the name of Moraldi! vainly his eager eye rested on the grating of his window! vainly his strong arm shook the rusty bars on their foundation! ineffectual were all his efforts; and, in an agony of frenzied despair, he dashed himself prostrate on the earth! Morano, in the interim, had, by the most earnest application, obtained permission

for Ubaldo to converse one half hour alone, with a religious, before he slept; this request being accorded, in the disguise of a Carmelite Monk he hastened to the prison, and presenting his order to the Governor, was admitted to Ubaldo.

"CONCEAL these!" he exclaimed, drawing some iron instruments from under his garment, "and in the dead of night force your way through the grating, dare to brave the stream, and I, with Corvino, will wait to succour you." He could add little more; the rest of the time was spent in united efforts to loosen the middle bar, and thereby effect an opening, which they had just concluded, when the entrance of the gaoler announced the expiration of the stated period.

"REMEMBER,

"REMEMBER, son, my instructions," said the pretended Friar, as he left the prison, "; and hope may still be yours."

HE now repaired to an obscure lodging, hired in the city, for the better carrying on of many infamous designs; and there changing his habit for that of a fisherman, was soon, with Corvino, on the border of the stream, where their little bark quickly conveyed them under the window of Ubaldo's prison. All now was hush, while the uncommon darkness of the night seemed to favour an enterprise, which was once more to prove the better genius of Ubaldo; already the aperture was effected, by the strength and ingenuity of his operations; the gaoler had gone his rounds; and the distant beat of the low muffled drum,

proclaimed the midnight hour, and warned each wretched inhabitant to prepare for approaching death! Now, in hollow sounds, he caught the echoes of the workmen employed in erecting his scaffold: at that moment a smile of malignant triumph flashed over his countenance. "Man!" he exclaimed, as he concluded his work at the grating, "how vain thy boasted security! power, how insignificant thy attributes! a little stratagem destroys them all; and Ubaldo yet shall live, to compleat his vengeance, and fulfil his vow!" He now raised his signal, which was immediately answered; and then climbing, by means of the broken and projecting stones, to the window, looked around him; he saw the boat, he distinguished the persons of his confederates, but the depth was frightful! and his bold, undaunted spirit,

almost

almost sunk in the contemplation of it. Again the drum beat hollow; it was near upon the hour of one; at three he was to die; the thought gave energy, gave fire: and, covering his face with his garment, he plunged instantly into the river. His fall was close beside the boat, but, from the stupendous height, he was nearly dead, when received into it by the Marchese; the restoratives he used, however, soon recovered him, and in less than half an hour he was safely concealed in the lodgings of the Marchese, where, by a variety of arts and contrivances, he was soon so compleatly metamorphosed, as excepting in a certain peculiar cast of feature, to retain but little resemblance to the once well-known Ubaldo. He then, on foot, set forth through the city, hoping, if possible, to reach the monastery (which

was the settled place of his destination,) before the following night. The vigilance of his pursuers frequently obliged him to halt upon his road, and secrete himself in the woods; in one of these it was, that the storm described by the Father Jerome overtook him. With difficulty, also, did he escape the bands of prowling banditti, against whom he more than once made a gallant and successful resistance. His arrival at the monastery has already been related; where, soon, by the influence of Morano, in the proud and powerful Abbate Zanotti, the culprit Ubaldo was buried and forgotten. Yet never for a moment could he be forgotten in the mind of the Marchese, over whom he ruled more despotically than ever; and who, at length, galled by his tyranny, and incensed at his arrogance, determined,

if

if possible, to make one violent effort, and rid himself of a man, who was at once his terror and his scourge. Still, here again the good genius of Ubaldo prevailed, and the poison administered at the wedding supper of his son, proved, by the just suspicions of the ever-watchful Zanotti, but the death-blow of Olivia; for having adroitly changed the glasses, he returned to the convent, exulting in his own pénetration, and only more determined and malignant in his designs against the Marchese. The means by which he gained the guilty weapon of Morano is already known; long observant of his every action, he traced him that night towards the cottage, where a momentary negligence secured it to himself, while in the apostacy of the villain Corvino, his dearest purposes were compleated. When is it that the

smallest particle of fidelity is to be found among the wicked? This axiom Corvino fully demonstrated; for, while he drained the coffers, while he worked on the guilty fears of his Lord, he became also the tool and colleague of his most inveterate foe. Long, however, did he not enjoy his ill-gotten wealth and independance, for, conscience awakening from her transient slumber, that cottage, the reward of his infamous labours, became, in imagination, the nightly scene of blood and despair: in every murmur of the wind, the groan of de Cleance was re-echoed: in every shadow of the moon, the murdered form of de Cleance was reflected. It was after one of these nights of torturing remorse, that he repaired to Lavora, and held that conversation in the garden, with Zanotti, which communicated such

such terror to the soul of Viola. It was then he declared he would hasten to the capital, and make a full and unreserved confession of his crimes, rather than bear those tormenting reflections which constantly haunted him by day, and robbed him of repose by night; but the arguments, the threats, the promises of Zanotti, finally succeeded; and the coward love of life once more induced him to stifle the monitor of his bosom, and still exist for those high rewards and advantages his wary employer pledged himself to bestow; while Zanotti, subtle in his vengeance, and refining on malice, though secure of Corvino in himself, daily harrassed the mind of the Marchese with apprehensions of his perfidy and impeachment. It may appear inconsistent, that one so politic should ever have, in any degree, placed himself

in

in the power of a vulgar and mercenary villain: often in the future succession of years had he sincerely regretted the necessity which reduced him to it; yet, though he had of himself succeeded in holding the grand clue to Moraldi's actions, it was still requisite he should be informed of his minutest word and proceeding; his own confidential servant, therefore, was the most certain means, and very little corruption was necessary to bring him over to his interest: for Ubaldo's knowledge of human nature had early taught him, that the man, who is once induced to be a tool to the vices of one employer, does not long hesitate at becoming the villain of another; and while he used him as the base instrument to betray his master, he despised him too much to trust him, and never suffered a syllable to escape, that could lead to the developement of

his

his own character and origin, or the hidden and mysterious motives for which he existed.

For two years after his marriage, Morano continued to visit the cottage where dwelt the lovely and ill-fated Eloise. To Ubaldo alone was the secret of her residence entrusted; and he, in the frequent absences of the Marchese, was the only being who ever broke the dreary solitude of her life. Unconscious of all that past, and ignorant of his union with Juliana, she looked forward to her approaching confinement, as to a circumstance fraught with the only pleasure she now could experience; for the indifference of Moraldi towards her increased daily, and his capricious nature, (though hating his wife,) was at last gradually alienating from the hapless victim

common

common humanity should have taught him to cherish. In the frequent interviews she had with Ubaldo, she had always treated him as the friend of Moraldi, had often lamented her fate and indiscretions, and looking up to him as to a man of most superior sense and understanding, requested his advice, and sought his mediation between her and Moraldi, whom she still could not but regard as the object of her earliest affections, and the parent of her child. Her youth, her beauty, her unprotected state, and above all, that ingenuous simplicity which irresistibly steals into the heart, proved the fascination of Ubaldo: in her presence, his projects, his plans, his very character, seemed to be laid aside, and he who was inaccessible to friendship, whose rugged, hardened spirit, appeared incapable of one gentle feeling, who had

had existed but on the destruction of others, and lived only to prey upon his species, became the slave of a woman, and of the passion with which she inspired him. Long was it, ere the eyes of Eloise opened to a circumstance that filled her with horror and dismay, while a month, during which she had given birth to a daughter, brought neither the Marchese nor any tidings of him; of Ubaldo she anxiously inquired; but his answers were vague, evasive, and confused; and to her earnest entreaties that he would beseech him not to desert his infant, he only replied by the most ardent acknowledgment of his own attachment, and offers of adoration and protection. Eloise staggered to a seat, pale, motionless, distracted, she prest her unconscious little one to her breast, but she could not articulate; astonishment

deprived

deprived her of utterance, while indignation, and the agony of insulted feelings, almost overpowered her weak frame.

"THREE days," said Ubaldo, "will I leave you to consider my proposals; suffer me then to hope that I may return, and conduct you from an obscurity unworthy of so much loveliness."

THE expiration of the period, however, only witnessed the haughty rejection of Eloise, the rage and disappointment of Ubaldo. "Proud Beauty!" he exclaimed, "For whom dost thou reject me? For a world, whose opinion you have forfeited; for a man who now despises you, and will be grateful to me, for ridding him of a burthen he has long wished to shake off." Every fibre in the heart of Eloise

bled, as she inwardly acknowledged the truth of his assertion, yet still was she as deaf to his flatteries and supplications, as she was unmoved by his threats, and unsubdued by his arguments; till finding that his eloquence was of no avail, he determined at once to acquaint her with the name, marriage, and real situation of Moraldi, together with the murder of her father, hoping, that by inspiring her with an abhorrence of his character, it might then be easily in his power to secure her to himself; but the effect this dreadful communication produced, proved (as it may readily be supposed,) very opposite to that he had intended and expected: reason for a while forsook its dwelling, and the whole of one day and night was spent in melancholy invocations to the shade of de Cleance, and ravings on the perfidious

fidious Moraldi, on whose name she incessantly called, as the betrayer of herself, and the murderer of her beloved father. Ubaldo now thought it most expedient to leave her for a few days; he knew she was completely in his snares, and did not doubt but the paroxysm of grief, once abated, she would see the establishment he offered in too eligible a point of view to reject it: to the care, therefore, of her only attendant did he consign her, desiring he might be immediately sent for, if any alarming symptoms took place. True, indeed, had he said, in declaring she was a burthen the infamous Moraldi wished to shake off; for, from his extravagant style of living, together with many expensive private pleasures, he soon considered the scanty pittance allowed for the support of her his perfidy had reduced

to

to misery and ruin, as a tax and a hardship; and to Ubaldo's offer of becoming her protector, he not only consented with avidity, but used every method in his power to forward and ensure his success.

The departure of Ubaldo soon recalled Eloise to sense and recollection, and she surveyed the past as a frightful dream, from which she awoke but to the keenest sense of the gloomy horrors presented in the futurity; this, however, was no time for reflection, and to save herself from dishonour, and her child from destruction, was now her first and sole object: to seek Moraldi, carried horror in the thought; every feeling of despair and disgust were united in his idea; and rather would she have perished, and witnessed the death of her child, than owe support

port or preservation to a being so repugnant and abandoned; to fly from the cottage, and seek an asylum within the walls of some charitable monastery, was therefore her determination: "And there," she cried, pressing her smiling infant to her bosom, "in the silence of the cloister, in the bosom of religion, I will bury all my sorrows; and thou, my darling, unknown and unmindful of the faithless world, shall be sheltered from the treachery of mankind."

The domestic who now watched over her with care and tenderness, had been formerly a servant of her father's, and the only follower of his deserted fortunes: warmly attached to his interest, and feeling almost a parent's fondness for the young Eloise, she had persisted in accompanying her through every

every change of her condition; and while she wept over her indiscretions, and lamented her unfortunate fate, had determined, while she needed her assistance, never to forsake her. To this faithful creature Eloise now communicated the apprehensions that filled her bosom, and entreated her aid and advice. To set out alone, unprotected, without prospect or destination, certainly appeared dreadful; yet the evils to which she was exposed by a longer continuance in her present situation was a much worse alternative, and one she resolved to brave every danger rather than run the hazard of. Ubaldo was absent; there might be time then for her to elude his pursuit; and as it was her resolution to take the veil, and bring up her daughter in the Convent with her, she hoped she might finally obtain a lasting and peaceful refuge from

from her troubles. Long taught to look forward to the present exigency, those sums, lavished on her by Moraldi in the days of his fondness, for the adornment of her person, had been carefully hoarded, in the sad presentiment, that a period might arrive, when he would cease to administer even to the necessities of his child: greedily did her eyes now devour the glittering treasure, as the tear of bitter regret mingled with the ray of pleasure, that beamed in the preservation of her offspring. Claudine, however, who foresaw many inconveniences in her mistress's being obliged to form an hasty choice as to the place of her future residence, entreated she would for a time take up her abode in the cottage of her sister, a poor woman, who dwelt in Terra di Lavora, and who would readily afford her the advantages of

privacy

privacy and protection: "It is true you will be but poorly housed," continued the careful Claudine, when she had finished her proposition, "but you will be concealed, and kindly treated; and my dear child, for I will still presume to call you so, remember that my late dear master (peace be to his ashes,) always used to warn you against a rash and hasty decision." The whole of this reasonable argument needed not the well-remembered words of her father to be the rule of her present conduct: "I must, however, journey economically, my good friend, replied Eloise with a heavy sigh, "for my poor store is scarcely adequate to the procuring my admittance at any Convent; but God, I trust, will be my guide," she added, "and to quit for ever this dwelling of wretchedness and

iniquity will give me strength and fortitude."

THE night previous to her departure was spent in preparations for her journey, and the break of dawn found her in the garb of a peasant, weeping on the shoulder of the humble friend she was destined never to behold again.

"I BLUSH at the weakness," said Eloise, as she tied up her long hair in the coarse worsted net presented by Claudine, "but I have an inward feeling, which tells me I am not long for this world: Last night, I dreamt I saw my father; and as we parted, he told me we soon should meet again, never more to be divided: ah! who then will be the guardian of my child? who will cherish, who protect her, when I am gone?"

"GOD!"

"GOD!" solemnly replied Claudine, and crossing her hands on her breast; "that Providence who can soften the 'clods of the valley unto you;' whose ray will pierce through the gloomy recesses of the forest, and smooth the ruggedness of your path, will then be the Father of your child."

ELOISE prest her hand, but the words she would have uttered died away on her lips, and she could only weep in silence. The poignancy of her feelings somewhat subsided; they now consulted on the best measures to be adopted for her present concealment and future safety. Claudine, it was agreed, should leave the cottage immediately on her departure, and take up her abode with a relation who lived in Naples, where Eloise was to write, as soon as she reached the end of her

journey. A voice at the gate, calling Claudine, now warned them it was time to separate; "for there is Guiseppe waiting with the horses," cried the domestic, as she descended the stairs to give him entrance. Guiseppe and Ludovico were two peasants, who lived in the village, and who, having a thorough knowledge of the surrounding country, chiefly earned a subsistence by acting as guides to the different families who resided there. Ludovico had long been employed in the little household of Eloise, as gardener and assistant to Claudine; and assured of his faith and honesty, it had been her earnest desire to obtain him as the companion of her enterprise; most unluckily, however, it happened that at this crisis he was confined by a dangerous illness to his bed; and on the application of Claudine the preceding day, his

his brother had in consequence offered his services. The forbidding countenance of this man caused her sorely to regret the exchange; yet, as she had never heard any thing to his disadvantage, and her Lady's situation urging dispatch, the agreement was made, that he should conduct her as far on her route as she thought necessary to her security. The distance Eloise had to go was about forty miles, the cabin of Claudine's sister being situate almost on the extremity of the province. With an aching heart she embraced the good woman, and taking a ring of much value from her finger, bid her receive it in compensation of her long and faithful services. She now took the infant in her arms, and had just reached the gate of her cottage, when she recollected her purse, containing all her money, had been left on the toilet

in her dressing-room ; " Hasten, good Guiseppe," cried the unsuspecting Eloise, " and bid Claudine deliver to you my purse." The man obeyed, while the eagerness with which, on returning, he regarded its contents, passed unheeded by Eloise, who, wholly absorbed in the contemplation of her sleeping child, was unconscious of a circumstance that would have filled the mind of one more observing with alarm and suspicion ; but the day proved uncommonly beautiful ; and delighted at the prospect of deliverance, at the novelty of the opening landscape, and above all, with the idea of returning to a life of honour and virtue, it was not till they put up for the night, that she thought of examining the features of her guide, who, but on such subjects as were requisite to the prosecution of their journey, had preserved a

sullen

sullen silence, which, as it saved her from the annoyance of indifferent and vulgar conversation, had been rather a source of congratulation on her part. "I would I had Ludovico with me," inwardly repeated Eloise, as the light reflected on the harsh countenance of Guiseppe, "I should have been more at ease;" still she endeavoured, with a liberality peculiar to her disposition, to restrain every thought injurious to him, as ungenerous and unfounded; and after defraying their expenses, they proceeded early the following morning, slowly on their way.

"I DARE say we shall gain our journey's end by close of evening," at length said her companion, breaking the long silence; for, as I shall lead directly down the mountain, and straight through the wood at the foot of it,

we shall cut off nearly six miles by the high road."

"But surely that would be the safest," replied Eloise in a timid voice, while her eye stretched over the immense forest that lay before them.

"Never you mind that," rejoined Guiseppe in a surly tone, "I suppose, Signiora, I know how to protect you."

Eloise forbore a reply, though a dreadful presentiment struck cold to her heart. They now began to descend the mountain, and had just entered the valley at its base, when Guiseppe requested permission to stop at the little inn before them, for refreshment for himself and the horses; Eloise drew her purse from her pocket, and putting money into his hand, desired he would bring

bring her a glass of wine and water, for she was faint and thirsty; this she hastily drank as she sat on the bank by the road side, nor was it till she had finished the whole contents, that she observed, with a sickening, undefinable sensation, some particles of a thick white powder settled at the bottom of the glass.

"WILL you not eat any thing?" said Guiseppe, with somewhat more of complacency in his manner; "you must need support, and this is the last habitation we shall come to till we reach the place of your destination."

ELOISE, however, had no appetite; for terror had now taken possession of all her faculties; and as she stole a glance at his dark and scowling eye,

she had only power to articulate, "Let us proceed as fast as possible."

By this time the thickening shades of evening came on; and as they entered the forest, Eloise imparted to her companion her fears of an approaching storm, for the clouds chased each other in quick succession; and as the wind set immediately in their faces, large drops of rain proved her apprehensions were well founded; the lightning, too, penetrated at intervals through the tall trees, while the low murmurs of distant thunder filled her with agony and dismay.

"Cruel Morano," inwardly sighed the wretched mother, as she covered her infant within her cloak, "to what miseries hast thou not reduced an already

ready too injured race? Oh, hadst thou but consigned me to the same grave with my persecuted parent, I had been blest, for that were mercy, when compared with what I have endured for thee! to the wretched, dishonoured existence to which thou hast condemned me, that had been bliss unparalleled!"

Tears now flowed fast from her eyes, while an unaccountable dizziness seized her head, and a numbness, as of death, crept through her whole frame.

"Oh God, that drink!" she cried, catching the arm of Guiseppe, as he rode close beside her, "it has killed me!"

"That's rather extraordinary too," answered the man, in an ironical tone,

" there is nothing in general very pernicious in the effect of good Florence, Signiora, and I mixed it myself."

THE thunder now rolled awfully, while the whistles of banditti, as they resounded through the forest, strengthened the horrors by which she was surrounded.

" How far have we to go now?" said Eloise, who every moment felt her stupor increasing.

" BUT two miles," answered Guiseppe; " and, if it were day-light, you could now distinguish the turrets of Morano Castle rising high above the trees."

" I CAN proceed no further," said Eloise, stopping her horse, as the name of

of Morano caught her ear. "Indeed, I am so ill, I can go no further."

Guiseppe instantly alighted, and taking the child in his arms, lifted her, pale and trembling, from the horse, while a heaviness of the most alarming nature crept over her; and though just sensible to the misery of her condition, she had not sufficient strength to speak, or make the smallest effort. The rain now pouring in torrents, he carried her to a spot where the thick and spreading foliage formed a shelter; there he left her, as she imagined, to fetch the child, who, covered in the cloak, still slept sound and peacefully by the side of the animals. Ill-fated Eloise, adversity had yet another shaft in store for thee; and the wretched offspring of de Cleance never in this world was to experience cessation of calamity.

calamity. Guiseppe had not been gone five minutes before a death-like slumber sealed up her eyes, alas! only to awaken to the dreadful conviction that he was a villain, and herself deprived, by his merciless treachery, of every prospect and of every hope.

"My child! my darling!" shrieked the terrified Eloise, starting from her damp pillow. "Guiseppe! where is my child?" but no Guiseppe answered to her call; and, half frantic, she was rushing from the spot, when the soft cry of her infant recalled her fleeting senses; and as she snatched it from the bank, where the remorseless plunderer had exposed it to all the dangers of the night, and all the fury of the tempest, her heart bounded in gratitude at enfolding its best treasure, and every other consideration was for a moment

ment forgotten. Truth, however, at last flashed on her mind, for on feeling in her bosom for the purse, to her horror and despair she discovered it had been taken, and herself and child thereby left destitute.

"Is there a Providence?" she cried, striking her clenched hands on her burning forehead; "Is there a God who will not aid a wretched mother? Man! man! let me not curse thy race; for still I had a father! Oh, Moraldi! betrayer of my youth, and murderer of my peace! murderer of the good de Cleance! where art thou now? Sleeping in ease, in comfort." She added, wildly tearing her hair, as her scalding tears bathed the face of her child, "while I wander, lost, distracted. And can there be a God?" At that moment the clouds broke above her head, while one bright star twinkling

ling in the firmament, uttered volumes to her soul.

"PARDON," she cried, sinking humbly on her knees; "pardon, oh Providence! the murmurs of thy wretched creature, and teach me meekly to bear the weight of my sufferings. Pardon, too, the offences of my persecutors, and let me hail with gratitude thy ray, as it now pierces through the recesses of the forest."

ALMOST as if by supernatural assistance, she felt her courage renovated and her fortitude increased; the storm also had subsided, and with alacrity she pursued her way nearly two miles, through all the intricacies and windings of the forest, till nature almost sunk in the exertion, and she was just falling to the earth, when the cottage of

of Gradisca appeared in view. The sequel is already known: nor is it scarcely requisite to say, that Guiseppe, from the time he beheld the little store of Eloise, had determined to secure it as his own, while a drug of soporific quality infused into her drink, offered the easiest prospect of obtaining a prize, the justice of a retributive God had ordained, however, should be the very means of ridding the world of a monster. Returning homeward after he had left his innocent companions to perish, as he thought, by the inclemency of the night, he was encountered by three of a resolute band of robbers, who instantly attacked him; determined not to part with his lately acquired booty, he drew his sword, and was preparing to make resistance, when one of the ruffians, by a skilful aim of his blunderbuss, shot him through the heart;

heart; instantly he staggered and fell. The money was then equally divided, and the head of Guiseppe hung by its hair, on the branches of a spreading oak, another dreadful memento of the catastrophes of the forest.

Eloise had not been one day an inhabitant of Gradisca's hospitable dwelling, ere she discovered that her end was approaching: yet, in the hour of expected dissolution, in a state of the severest bodily suffering, anxiety for the fate and future welfare of her daughter, was the only pang she knew. Death was to her most welcome but for that idea. For her she would at any time have forfeited her life; for her alone did she now seek to cherish existence; but it was not to be; and after revolving over a thousand plans; after a whole night past in restless inquie-

tude,

tude, one only, of romantic and precarious promise, presented itself, which was to supplicate the pity and protection of the wife of Morano for his innocent and deserted child. It is more than probable, the praises and commendations of Gradisca on the character and virtues of the amiable and respected Marchesa, had first prompted the idea. She understood also, that she was far from happy herself, and lived much estranged from her Lord in the Castle of Morano, whose vicinity to her present asylum, gave her every opportunity of learning the conduct and history of its inhabitants. With eager ears did she listen to Gradisca's eulogiums on the Marchesa; while the accounts of her benevolence offered the salutary hope, that she, who had a heart open to the common sufferings of humanity, would surely extend her pity and compassion

passion to so interesting and powerful a pleader. To Claudine, it is true, she might have consigned her; but she was poor, aged, and helpless, and almost unable to support herself; it would have been both unjust and unreasonable to have applied to her. In these her last moments also, the idea of rescuing her name from that obloquy with which, should it ever reach the ears of the Marchesa, it would be branded, was another forcible inducement to address her; and as she knew her death was inevitable, she lost no time in fulfilling her following sad and melancholy task.

"To the Marchesa di Morano.

"WRETCHED, repentant, and dying, the lost Eloise now presumes to address the virtuous wife of the Marchese di Morano; dares to make acknow-

knowledgment of her errors, and supplicate her mercy and protection for the injured offspring of her husband. Start not, Signiora! I am guilty, but not abandoned; I was imprudent, but never premeditatedly wicked; in me, in the suffering victim of Morano's perfidy, in the feeble, emaciated woman, whose dying hand can now but faintly pourtray the sorrows of her heart, you would have beheld the only daughter of a noble house; in the person of the humble Hubert de Cleance, you would have viewed the great, but unfortunate Marquis de Volange; and in Moraldi di Morano, the murderer of that unfortunate, the seducer of his daughter, and the father of her child. Oh Lady! when the Eve of San Pietro shall come round, then remember, it was that fatal day which gave me to destruction; that fatal

fatal day, which cast me, innocent, helpless, unprotected, into the power of a man, who has torn my heart asunder; then warn my child against the deceptions of the world, the delusions of imagination, and the indulgence of that false sensibility, that torrent of tenderness and feeling, where honour and happiness are for ever entombed. Though too remote for your personal recollection, the misfortunes of my unhappy family cannot be unknown to you: my father, Philipe de Volange, married, at nineteen, a most beautiful woman, one year younger than himself, without rank, fortune, or what was of infinitely more importance, an upright and virtuous mind: with her, spite of the commands of his sovereign, the entreaties of his father, and the remonstrances of all his relations, he entered into a private engagement;

and thus, by yielding to one wrong and imprudent inclination, placed a scourge into the hands of his enemies, and sealed his own doom, and that of his miserable children. Among the few who continued on terms of intimacy with my father, after his inauspicious union, was a young Italian, of narrow fortune, but of noble birth; Ferando, Conte di Montebino, a man of brilliant talents, lively imagination, and specious manners; but with an heart inwardly depraved, habits profligate and vicious; and of a disposition ambitious, selfish, and rapacious; while a spirit of enterprise and intrigue had long gained him influence at the court, as his wit and vivacity not only made him the favourite and companion of a weak and licentious Monarch, but the secret adviser of his measures, and the instigator of various acts of tyranny

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and oppression. Into this faithless bosom did my unsuspecting father pour all his confidence; through his means had he first been introduced to my too lovely mother; and with well-dissembled solicitude did he appear to be endeavouring for my father's restoration in favour of the King; while, in reality, he was at that very time working his downfal, and the ruin of his peace, by estranging the affections of his wife, whose ruling passion was an inordinate vanity, and at whose shrine she not only sacrificed her own honour, but the happiness of a husband who adored her. Though his circumstances were confined, and though the resentment of his father would sometimes cast a cloud over his felicity, de Volange, in the fancied affection of his wife, in the society of his friend, and the birth of his children,

dren, fondly imagined himself blest and affluent. Fleeting pleasures! and too frequent sources of the heart's keenest pang, how often do we overrate their worth, at the moment they are preparing for us the bitterest draught of disappointment: so proved it with my father; that rash independance of character, which, as a boy, had led him to follow his own inclinations, rather than act in conformity with the wishes of others, now had often hurried him to an unguarded and indiscreet avowal of his sentiments on the conduct and proceedings of the Sovereign and his Ministers, whose measures he ridiculed and condemned. Montebino entered into his feelings, sided with his opinions, and seemingly applauded that patriotic spirit, which, in secret, he perfidiously laid hold of, as the certain

means of his own success, and the ruin of his generous friend. Every word was repeated to the King, strengthened and exaggerated; and that fair morn, which seemed to rise beaming with joy and gladness on my father, saw his sun set, in hopeless misery. On that day my brother compleated his thirteenth year, while the old Marquis de Volange, who had long been in a low and bad state of health, sent for my father, and, after a tender and affecting meeting, assured him of his forgiveness and future affection; promising also, to see my mother, with whom he henceforward consented to live on terms of parental amity. On the evening of that day, when my father, surrounded by his family, elevated in spirits, and high in promised happiness, was sitting in the midst of a select circle of friends, he was surprised

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by the abrupt entrance of a stranger, who, looking sternly in his face, said, he arrested him as an enemy to the State, and a traitor to the kingly government; and that his son, Louis de Volange, a boy of only thirteen years old, was also to be taken into custody, as privy to his treasons. Montebino, who had been engaged at chess with my mother, now started from his seat, and in a tone of authority, bade the officer desist, and allow him a word with my father, who stood transfixed with wonder and astonishment.

"Have I not warned you, my too ingenuous de Volange!" exclaimed the serpent-like Italian, in a voice of sorrowful reproach, "that your rash temerity would eventually lead to this fatal conclusion?"

"FLY, generous di Montebino!" cried she, whom I yet blush to call my mother; "fly! oh listen to the King, or my beloved husband is for ever lost!"

"Go to my father," said the brave de Volange, calmly surrendering himself into the custody of the officer, "and bid him use his interest, for the son who, while he dared breathe forth the genuine sentiments of nature, in support of his fellow-creatures, never harboured a thought injurious to the dignity of the Sovereign, or the welfare of his country." He now embraced my mother, and taking me affectionately in his arms, bade us be of good cheer, as he committed us to the care of di Montebino; and then, accompanied by my brother, (whose young heart seemed to swell with triumph,

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in being the partner of his father's fate,) immediately left the room. Let me hasten over circumstances, whose remembrance, young as I then was, still press heavy on my heart, and almost incapacitate me from the continuance of my present melancholy duty. Such was the fatality attending every incident in the life of the unfortunate de Volange, that the messenger, who had been dispatched directly on his arrest, with information to his father, returned in the space of three hours, bearing the heavy tidings of his death. After the interview with his son in the morning, he had appeared much better, but so rapid were the changes in his disorder, that before the evening came on, another violent relapse had taken place, and he expired shortly after, in the arms of his attendant, beseeching Heaven to bless and pro-

sper his son. This news was almost too much for my father; it seemed, indeed, as if Heaven conspired in his misfortunes; and he bent under this unexpected stroke, as to the peculiar dispensations of that God, whose name, under the severest pressure of affliction, he never ceased to worship and adore. Many days did he exist, in all the wretchedness of a prison, exposed to daily insults from the petty tools of oppression, and lingering under the tortures of suspense; yet still the welfare of his children, the happiness of his wife, were his first and tenderest concerns; for their sakes, did he entreat his prosecutors to allow him a speedy trial; for their sakes alone, did he exert his interest, to be restored to his rank and liberty. During his confinement, he was constantly visited by di Montebino, who always came,

fraught

fraught with anxious messages from my mother.

At length the day was fixed for the trial, the judges were nominated, and de Volange, with the assistance of his pretended friend, procured, as he imagined, many forcible proofs of his own allegiance to the crown of France, and of the unattainted loyalty of his family: on these he now suffered himself to place the most sanguine reliance, while the zeal and influence of di Montebino left him little doubt, in his own mind, but that he should certainly obtain a fair and honourable acquittal. On the night, however, preceding the day on which he was to be arraigned, he was surprised by the unexpected re-appearance of di Montebino, pale, trembling, and apparently much agitated.

"My dear friend," he cried, while his voice seemed to falter with emotion, "listen to me;—I have just been with the King, and grieved am I to find you have some private, though powerful enemies in the council, who, I plainly perceive, are bent on your destruction: in this case, innocence and integrity are of little avail. Beloved de Volange, could I live to see you bound like a culprit on the scaffold? could I bear to hear the lamentations of your helpless children, to witness the sufferings, perhaps the insults, offered to your lovely wife?"

"MONTEBINO," said my father, this is in truth a sorry picture; but Justice, I trust, shall still triumph over treachery and deception; the King will see his error, and be convinced of my truth."

"NEVER,"

"NEVER," answered Montebino; "you are to blame for thus indulging a false security; it was but now he spurned me from his presence, for interceding in your behalf; and after more than an hour's pressing solicitation, the only mercy I could obtain, was banishment for yourself and son, otherwise you must stand a trial, which inevitably dooms you to an ignominious death."

"BUT surely," replied de Volange, "if I am proved innocent, my trial"——

"Is a mere farce!" passionately interrupted di Montebino; "done to amuse the people with whom you are popular, and to give the colour of equity to your condemnation, on which I see the King is resolved. This is no

time for evasion, de Volange; you must be aware, that you have never been a favourite at Court, since that imprudent marriage, which prevented your espousing the woman to whom the King wished to see you united. Ah, that marriage! why did I ever listen to your persuasions? why was I so blind to my own judgment, as to have ever introduced you to that fatal beauty, to whom I fear you now owe all your present misfortunes?"

"Forbid it, Heaven!" interrupted my father, "that I should ever regret those moments, which first taught me the double blessings of friendship and of love, though purchased at the expense of my existence!" In this manner did they converse for some time, during which, the crafty di Montebino succeeded but too well in his plans on

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my credulous parent; in the clearest manner he represented the iniquity of the judges, and the corruption of the witnesses who were to be brought against him; and above all, the weakness of innocence and integrity, when contending with power, treachery, and deception. Alas! overruled by his arguments, and melted even to tears, by the earnest manner in which he besought his compliance; distracted for the fate of his wife, and the preservation of his children, in an evil hour my father consented to accept banishment for himself and son, in lieu of that trial he was led to suppose would eventually end, not only in his own death, but the entire confiscation of his property, and the consequent ruin of his family. Ere the morrow's dawn, an order came down from the Council, exiling Philipe and

Louis de Volange, during the King's pleasure, as persons suspected of being inimical to the existing government. "Poor boy!" exclaimed my father, as he folded his son to his heart; and once more he resolved to stay, and brave every danger, rather than behold his beloved and amiable child driven forth, an exile and a wanderer. "But I will never leave you, my father!" exclaimed Louis, clinging round his neck, "they should tear my heart first!"

Again the steadiness of his noble boy, and the honied words of di Montebino, renovated the almost broken spirit of my hapless parent; he assured him that a very few months would certainly restore him to his native country; for that the indignation of the King once appeased, it would

would be very easy to procure his pardon and return. It was agreed I should accompany my father into Italy, while my brother, who was not permitted to take the same route, received letters of recommendation from di Montebino, to a friend of his residing in Spain, in the province of Andalusia; my mother, whose remaining for a short time in France was deemed necessary, to the security of our rights and estates, was present at this mournful consultation; and while she hung in fondness round the neck of my father, vowed, unless he was recalled within a very short period, that she should leave every thing to the care of di Montebino, and join us in Italy. Ah, how often did he not press her to his heart! how often did he not enfold di Montebino, calling him the guardian angel of his family, his friend, his

brother; and conjured him, by the long and sacred ties that had subsisted between them, to comfort and protect her, who was dearer to him than life! My young and gallant brother seemed alone a firm and unmoved witness of the scene; "Conte di Montebino," said Louis, while his eye was rivetted on the countenance of the villain; "Conte di Montebino, you have undertaken a solemn trust; the wealth and dignity of a high, though injured house, are both committed to your keeping; guard them with integrity, with honour; for remember, though at the remotest corner of the earth, the day shall come, when Louis de Volange will seek and revenge himself upon the enemies of his father!"

Let me hasten to the conclusion of my sad narration; dreadful as was the parting,

parting, it was at length effected. My mother was borne in strong convulsions from the prison; Louis, attended by a guard, soon after set forth, followed by the prayers and blessings of the multitude, who accompanied him far on his journey; while my father, with me, now his only comfort, after another affecting interview with di Montebino, bade adieu to his native country for ever.

I was at this period only ten years old; but sorrow, and the many scenes of calamity to which I had been the witness, gave me, in addition to the early education I had received, reflections far above my age; indeed the sad events I have related were then deeply engraven on my heart, and memory has never ceased to record them. For several months we constantly

stantly received letters from my mother and the Conte; these were filled with every expression of grief and tenderness on her part, false promises, and deceitful hopes on his; weary, however, at length of keeping up the delusion, their communications gradually became less frequent, and a long, and to us most torturing silence, was shortly followed, by a letter hastily delivered into the hand of my father, by a Frenchman and a stranger, as he returned from his evening walk; eagerly did he recognize the well-known characters of our old and faithful steward; they are now before me, and I enclose them, to unfold to you one of the basest systems of diabolical iniquity that ever succeeded against the peace and honour of one of the best of mankind.

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"ONE to whom the interests of the excellent Marquis de Volange are still dear, takes this method of informing him of the daring plot, too artfully carried into effect by the vilest of their species: the false di Montebino, and still more infamous Marchioness, in defiance of every law, divine and human, determined to sacrifice you, my Lord, and your innocent offspring, to their vices and rapacity: in the mistress of the favourite, the honourable wife of de Volange is forgotten, while the countenance of a profligate and licentious Court, only adds effrontery to crimes, the vengeance of an offended God must, sooner or later, overtake and punish: think not of returning to France, the death both of you and yours will be the certain consequence: in the banishment to which the treachery of a false friend has doomed you,

rests,

rests, I fear, your only chance of safety and preservation."

This letter was indeed a death-blow to my father; he cast himself to the earth, and notwithstanding my earnest entreaties, shut himself up for two whole days in his own apartment, neither taking the smallest sustenance, or admitting the light: time, however, and religion, though they could not heal the deep and rankling wounds of perfidy and ingratitude, yet taught him to endure them. From that dreadful moment, the names of my mother, or Montebino, never passed his lips, while, with the bitterest sensations of fear and anxiety, did he conjecture on the fate of our beloved Louis, of whom we never heard from the time of our separation, and who we could not but apprehend had fallen a sacrifice to the same

same treachery which had overwhelmed his unhappy parent. One circumstance, however, I must not omit; the first meeting I had with my father, after the receipt of the fatal intelligence, he insisted on my taking a solemn vow, never to betray my name and origin, unless the most urgent and important circumstances obliged me to do so; those circumstances now exist, for they will, I trust, move your gentle nature to commiserate a series of undeserved misfortunes, and to preserve the last unfortunate branch of our devoted family from poverty, ruin, and death." [Here she proceeds to relate the progress of her acquaintance with Morano, and concludes with an account of the murder of her father, and her own perilous adventures through the forest.]

"And

"And now, amiable Marchesa," continued the dying mother, "I have little more to add: keep from my child the knowledge of her disastrous birth; and above all, keep her from the knowledge of her father: Oh! may he prove to you an amended character! and may the tears he has wrung from these wretched eyes, the pangs he has communicated to this lacerated bosom, prove an expiation of my long repented offences! Ah! if ever for a moment you should accuse the temerity of one so frail as I am, in daring to address you, then remember it is the truly virtuous alone, who best feel for the distresses they are exempt from; it is the mind of strictest honour, that sheds the softest tear of sympathy and commiseration on the weaknesses it has subdued, on the errors it is superior to: I have erred, but I am repentant; I wandered

wandered in a luckless hour from the paths of duty and rectitude, but the just God, whose eye pierces into the heart's most secret recesses, best can tell how sincerely, how unceasingly I wept my defalcation. Bring up my daughter, as the child of humble obscurity, nor let the offspring of shame know whom to curse as the authors of her being; be far removed from her mind the blandishments of false and misguiding sentiment; if she has beauty, teach her to accord but its true and proper estimate; tell her it leads poverty to disgrace; wealth, to vanity and folly; if she has sensibility, it will place a weapon in the hands of her enemies, a festering thorn within her own bosom; check it in its growth; though the genuine source of the soul's best gratifications, it is fraught with danger, and teems with misery; for

tell

tell her, Signiora, she is a traveller through a world, where each man tugs at the heart-strings of his brother; where falsehood wears the garb of sincerity; envy, calumny, and malice, the forms of chastity and virtue; interest, and dissimulation, the masks of moderation and generosity: And oh! tell her that happiness is a dream, that feelings are a curse, and that affections are the means by which disappointment levels her keenest shaft; teach her to arm her breast, with principles, firm, steady, and severe; to acquire strength and soundness of understanding, proper discrimination, and true judgment; bid her view this life but as the passport to another; to value peace and tranquillity as the nearest approach to felicity human nature is ordained to experience: And lastly, as the only method to attain that tranquillity,

quillity, let the spirit of industry, integrity, and independance, be the spur to all her actions. Pardon this digression; anxiety for the welfare of a beloved child must plead my excuse; oh! may her virtues, and never-ending gratitude towards you, speak for me, when I shall be mouldering in the grave! and may the orphan's prayers, the widow's praises, waft your last sigh on wings of joy to Heaven, and communicate peace and pleasure to your heart, when mine shall beat no longer."

ELOISE de VOLANGE.

THE effect this letter produced is already known; faithfully indeed did the Marchesa di Morano fulfil the trust reposed in her; and while she considered many of the last admonitions of the luckless Eloise as the effusions of a

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wounded and disappointed spirit, she inculcated on the mind of her pupil the steadiest principles of persevering morality, with a love of society in general, philanthropy and good will towards her fellow-creatures.

On the evening of the day on which she had consigned her infant to the care of the Marchesa, Eloise breathed her last; the precious charge had, in consequence of her note to the good priest who attended her in her dying moments, been confided to the care of one of the brethren, who, in the disguise of a peasant, delivered it into the hands of one of the Marchesa's attendants, while the anxious desire of Zanotti, to penetrate into the mystery of her thoughts, may easily be accounted for, from Viola's uncommon likeness to her mother; and as a thousand con-

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fused suggestions arose to his mind, he determined by some means or another, if possible, to discover who she really was. Just at the time of the flight of Eloise from her own dwelling, he became a prisoner for the crime already mentioned; and on Morano alone, therefore, remained his only means of obtaining intelligence of her, whom, strange to say, he never ceased to remember but with interest and tenderness; that tenderness, forcing through the harshness of his nature, had often led him to contemplate the features of Viola, till in wonder at himself, he had rushed from her, in solitude to crush those soft emotions he was ashamed to acknowledge. All Morano's enquiries after Eloise had, however, proved fruitless; for Claudine, while she lived, was steady to her trust, nor did she long survive her unfortunate mistress:

as is generally the case, one grand fall, overwhelms many lesser bodies in its ruins, so did the misfortunes of de Cleance extend to this their lowly dependant, as in the loss of her situation she experienced at an age the least able to support them, all the miseries of want and distress; too old for employment, too infirm to seek one, she quietly sunk into the tomb, praying with her latest breath for the happiness and restoration of the posterity of the good de Volange. That the knowledge of her husband's guilt preyed inwardly on the peace of his wife is most certain, for however despicable her opinion had hitherto been of him, the idea of being united to a man capable of so much wickedness, deprived her of peace, and caused her to number the revolvement of her anguished life with bitterness and sorrow; never did the Eve of San Pietro

Pietro come round without her deluging the narrative with her tears; nor ever did she gaze on the lovely countenance of Viola, without the most poignant sensations of anxiety and sorrow; when laid too upon the couch of eternity, and when the secret of her birth pressed heavy on her heart, gladly would she have broken through the last commands of the hapless Eloise, and rather than have left this world with the load of dreadful matter which had so long oppressed her, rather than have left the deserted Viola unfriended and unprotected, have communicated to her husband her knowledge of his atrocious conduct, of his near affinity to the orphan Viola, and after exhorting him to repentance, supplicate for her his pity and support; but this consolation was denied to her, and the absence of the Marchese, while it de-

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termined her strictly to keep from Viola the history of her origin, yet deprived her of the only comfort which in this life she was capable of experiencing.

Zanotti, whose penetration had long led him to suspect all that was passing within her mind, hoped by ingratiating himself into her favour to have gained her confidence; foiled, however, in this expectation, he resolved to obtain that by stratagem which he was not likely openly to acquire; and therefore by means of the private access he had to the castle, to watch her every action, and note all her interviews with Viola: with this intent, the night after his conference with her in the garden, instead of proceeding to the monastery, he followed her to the door of the saloon, and overheard

heard the servant deliver the Marchesa's message. A quick developement of character had through life been one of his most successful springs of action, nor did it in the present instance require much discernment to perceive, that a certain tincture of romance and superstition were the only foibles in that of Viola; with this to work upon, he had only to follow at some distance up the great stair-case, where the gloominess of the scene, and her own terrified imagination, readily fancied the dark form of the Monk to be that of a supernatural being, while the noises he purposely made, still further served to increase her fears, and ensure him every prospect of success. Concealed behind a cabinet, in the dressing-room of the Marchesa, which was only divided by a thin partition from the one

in which she slept, he plainly distinguished the whole of their conversation, a conversation which strengthened the supposition that the apparently obscure orphan was of infinitely more consequence than was generally imagined, and might prove an essential instrument in his hands. To this end, by means of those false and peculiarly constructed keys which he usually kept about him, he opened the writing desk of the Marchesa, removed the letter and money placed there for the use of Viola, and from that moment took all possible care to prevent any access to the apartments of the deceased; he it was also, who on the night she sought the history of her parents, after terrifying her mind with every circumstance of imaginary horror, finally secured to himself those papers, which soon proved

ed his suspicions to have been well-founded; and while he could not but rejoice at the timely discovery, when he reflected on the sentiments of Albenza in favour of Viola, he determined also, not only to alarm the mind of the Marchese on the subject of his son's attachment, (an attachment he had himself early noted,) but likewise to take immediate steps to effect an eternal separation between them, by advising Morano to form some other more equal and eligible engagement, as the only certain method of preventing Albenza's entering into a clandestine and disgraceful union: thus far his motives had been just, but his conscience, once relieved from this load of horrible apprehension, he again hugged the papers fondly to his heart, in the diabolical assurance, that they

gave him a stronger hold over the man whom he had resolved to devote to the very refinement of suffering, to the most lingering destruction.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"Banishment, with all its train of evils, is so far from being the cause of contempt, that he who bears up with an undaunted spirit against them, erects on his very misfortunes a trophy to his honour."

BOLINGBROKE.

WHEN Louis de Volange burst from the arms of his heart-broken parent, to seek an asylum in a foreign kingdom, his first emotions were sorrow and despair; tears started to his eyes, sighs burst in agony from his bosom; born to rank, splendour, and affluence, blest with talents, beautiful in person, rich in accomplishments, and amiable in disposition, the sternest

philosopher would have lingered on the past, and asked, why this should be? "Farewell for ever, my home, my friends, my happiness!" sighed the youth, as he mounted the horse presented him by his guards. He was going to banishment, for a crime of which his youth alone pronounced him to be innocent; he was torn, perhaps for ever, from a family he adored, and by whom he thought himself tenderly beloved. These were painful reflections, yet de Volange endeavoured to dispel them; complaints and repinings might bring consolation to a weak and feminine mind, but he felt, that to bear up against the malice of fortune, and the buffets of adversity, was the effort of a noble spirit, and one which nature had in her bounty bestowed upon him; even exile, with all its concomitant evils, when compared to a life of vice

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and dishonour, gave a promise of comfort and contentment; and, though it was hard to be thus separated from all he held most dear, he should more sincerely prove his affection, by trying to overcome his calamities, and by preserving unsullied the honour of their name, than by a puerile indulgence of regrets, which would only debase himself, without raising them from their sorrows.

Poor hapless youth! of what avail were these thy virtuous resolutions? Doomed 'to bloom unseen, and waste thy sweetness on the desert air;' thy years of hopeful manhood were all spent in the solitude of the gloomy dungeon, to which the fiend-like di Montebino had consigned thee.

When de Volange discovered, that

instead of being received into the hospitable mansion of a prepared and expecting friend, the letters he carried were but passports to an eternal and hopeless confinement, his acquired fortitude gave way, and he became almost frantic. After travelling a long and weary journey, he halted with his guards, on a dull and misty evening, before the walls of a once stately but now ruinous building, situate on the south-west frontier of Spain, and overlooking the Atlantic Ocean; here a gaunt and rough figure of a man made his appearance, and to the eager enquiries of de Volange, only replied by the dreaded information, that he was a prisoner at the will and pleasure of the Conte di Montebino, to whose family, by right of female inheritance, this edifice formerly belonged, though it was now falling to decay from inability

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to keep up its ancient magnificence. Threats or remonstrances were useless, and de Volange, with one heart-rending pang to the memory of his wronged father, submitted in silence to his fate. Three-and-twenty years did this unhappy man drag on a wretched existence within the walls of a close and solitary prison, where, excepting in the change of his guards, he had never beheld the human countenance; and where neither books, nor one cheering source of intellectual consolation, ever mitigated the miseries of his situation, while a kind of despairing resignation had long taught him to survey the narrow boundary of his confinement with callous indifference.

As he sat one evening, watching the progress of the moon, bursting majestically from a bright and silvery cloud, he

he perceived the shadow of a man, walking sometimes in a hasty disordered pace, then stopping, as if to contemplate the building; de Volange (though he almost smiled at the feeling that could yet be interested in any casual occurrence) experienced an irresistible impulse to ascertain who he was, and therefore tried to force his passage through a narrow grated door, which led from his own dungeon on a flight of steep broken stone steps, opening a descent to another leading to the beach. Here he paused and listened, for the fear of being discovered and more harshly confined, made him hesitate ere he proceeded farther: all, however, was quiet, and reaching the end of the steps, he could not resist gazing from the narrow aperture, on the scene of sublime nature before him; when, as his hand rested on the jutting fragments

fragments of the wall, he felt something like a paper hastily thrust into it between the bars; surprise for a moment bereft him of every faculty, till quickly, concealing it in his bosom, he bent forward, and observed a man much disguised, fast receding from the spot, while, by the clear rays of the moon, he now with a beating heart perused these words:—

"In the person of your present guard, power and bribery have gained you a friend; he will afford you the requisite habiliments, and by to-morrow's sun-set you are free to quit Spain for ever. The last atonement a wretched sinner has now to offer, is to bid you seek your wandering and injured sister in Italy; protect her, and do not curse your lost but repentant mother. Enclosed is money, with a full confes-

sion

sion of crimes, that will freeze your blood, and make you detest the being to whom you owe your existence and your misfortunes.

" Eloise de Volange."

THIS confession was but a repetition of circumstances already related, excepting that the Marchioness, after several years past in infamy and extravagance with her atrocious lover, was awakened to penitence and remorse by a severe and painful illness, which, together with the news of her husband's death, brought her to a full sense of the magnitude of her crimes, and a wish, if possible, to make now the only reparation in her power, by liberating her son. One daughter, also, her offspring by Montebino, had often, by her disobedience and ingratitude, caused her bitterly to regret the dutiful

and promising children she had so inhumanly cast from her, while the ill-treatment and final desertion of Montebino, who, with Olivia, left her, to commence a new career in Italy, agonized her with the comparison of the excellent husband she had devoted to destruction, and the inhuman sordid tyrant, who now only reproached her with her crimes, and left her to despair and poverty. Stretched on the bed of death, she almost deprived herself of common necessaries, to raise a sum sufficient to induce the gaoler of the unfortunate de Volange to connive at, and assist in, his liberation; this she then committed to the charge of an old and faithful servant of her late Lord; and just as the pangs of dissolution were fast approaching, as life sat quivering on her lips, and anxiety for the fate of her son withheld her fleeting

fleeting spirit, the looked-for messenger entered the apartment, with news of his success. The sudden burst of happiness was too powerful; for, raising her dim eyes to heaven, she besought its pardon for her own offences, and a fervent blessing on the heads of her children, then sunk back upon her pillow, and uttering the name of de Volange, expired. The sensations that filled the mind of her son, on reading the avowal of his erring, though repentant parent, may readily be conceived, nor was he restrained by the fear of personal danger from taking France in his way, and visiting the spot where he hoped to have been pressed to her heart, and pour the balm of peace and forgiveness on the wounds of anguish and contrition; ere, however, he reached the seat of his ancestors, she had breathed her last, and de Volange, while he resolved

solved to make himself known, and demand justice on his oppressor, yet thought it most expedient first to pass over into Italy, and having discovered his sister, return with her into France, there acknowledging his name and rank, and claiming his lost inheritance. It chanced, however, that the first place he stopped at on his arrival in Naples, was the house of the poor woman where the good old Claudine had died, and who had been her near relation; enquiring of her, if she had ever known any person of the name of de Cleance? (for the assumed one of his father had been told him by the servant who procured his release,) he was instantly informed of every particular relative to that unfortunate man, as communicated by Claudine in her last moments; for, on the night preceding her departure, Eloise (who saw

saw she had long suspected) acquainted her with the circumstance of her father's murder, charging her at the same time never to betray the secret. Faithfully did Claudine hold the trust, not only on account of her promise, but also that she knew her feeble evidence would be very ineffectual against so great and powerful a man as the Marchese di Morano; in the awful period of closing existence, however, her soul refused its flight in peace, charged with so foul a burthen, and calling the good Benedetta to her bedside, she recited the whole adventure, imploring her, if ever a fit season arose, not to let the blood of the innocent go unrevenged. Stung to the heart by this intelligence, de Volange raved about the apartment, cursing Montebino as the primary author of all their calamities,

ties, and vowing vengeance against the man who had dared contaminate the honour of his sister. The old woman, who began to fear his senses were impaired, besought him to moderate his transports, and assured him, that it would be a very easy matter to discover the Marchese, as she believed he was at that moment resident in Naples. This presented consolation to the frantic de Volange, though a little consideration told him, he was but ill able to contend with so mighty a foe; without money, friends, or any substantial proofs, what revenge remained for him, save challenging him to fight, which he knew the Marchese would refuse to accept from an obscure and unknown stranger, a plea, his guilty conscience would gladly induce him to make use of; cowardly assassination was an idea he spurned at, while open public justice, sanctioned by law, and executed

executed in the view of all mankind, was the right he panted for, and to obtain which he now determined to check the impetuosity of his feelings, and by acting with caution and reserve, acquire such certainty of the crime of Morano, and of the actions of Montebino, as would enable him to bring their atrocities to a proper light, and finally overwhelm them with the shame and punishment they deserved. For this purpose, after settling to take up his residence with Benedetta, who now began to feel assured of his being a rational creature, he sallied forth into the city, resolving to frequent all places of public resort, that might bring him to the sight of the two men he so anxiously sought. His person was totally unknown to the Marchese, while his acquirement of the Spanish language and manner, together with the long interval that had elapsed,

would

would prevent his being recognised by di Montebino, whose offences were now almost forgotten in the greater injuries which called for all his vengeance and exertion. It was in one of these mixed assemblies that he became acquainted with the Signior Valverdi, an amiable man, of good family, on whom his pleasing manners and interesting person soon made so great an impression, that he not only sought him as an acquaintance, but cultivated him as a friend; to him de Volange opened his whole heart, informed him of his name and history, requesting his assistance and advice.

"I AM acquainted with the Conte di Montebino, said Valverdi, after listening to his narrative with every mark of pity and respect; "and, if you like, will introduce you at his villa; this very night

night he gives one of those splendid and luxurious entertainments, supported, I now conclude, on the ruin of your patrimony."

De Volange most readily agreed to this proposal, while his friend acquainted him with every known particular of the life of the Marchese di Morano; his close and early connexion with the infamous Ubaldo, and every circumstance relative to that extraordinary and mysterious character. "Mark me," said Valverdi, when he had made an end of his interesting recital, "the Marchese is a constant guest at Montebino's, and will be there to-night; force yourself on his attention, while I observe the Conte; endeavour also, in the course of conversation, to name Ubaldo as a man you remember; note him well then, watch every

every turn in his countenance; and if he betray an emotion, be certain he is guilty; for it was to Ubaldo's being in possession of some important secret, that the world ascribed his unbounded sway over Morano."

He *is* guilty, my friend!" exclaimed the agitated de Volange, when they reached the street, after the confusion at Montebino's; "and my unhappy father, my deluded Eloise, have both, too surely, been the victims of this remorseless villain!"

After many plans started, arguments discussed, and schemes dismissed, it was finally proposed they should meet in the course of one week from that time, (as Valverdi was under the necessity of hastening to a sick parent a short distance from the city,) and then

adopt measures for accusing Montebino, and bringing the Marchese to punishment. Valverdi, however, was detained much longer than he expected; and it was one evening in the course of that period, that de Volange, taking a solitary walk on the bay, had a note slipt into his hand by an unknown person, who immediately after disappeared; hastily he tore it open, and perused the following lines:—

"The Marquis de Volange, though apparently forsaken and deserted, has still one friend ready and able to assist in bringing his enemies to justice. If you have courage, therefore, and will venture alone and unattended, at midnight to this same spot, I will make my purpose known to you."

The author of this epistle may be readily suspected. The first impulse of Ubaldo, on perusing the narrative of Eloise, was to make its contents subservient to his views on the Marchese, whose ruin and destruction he was now resolved to lose no time in accomplishing; while a letter from Morano at that moment, by recounting the adventure at Montebino's, and the striking likeness of the stranger to de Cleance, at once inspired him with the hope, that in this mysterious Frenchman he should discover the long banished de Volange: for this purpose, Corvino was summoned to the convent, and after receiving various instructions from his wary employer, was quickly dispatched to the city; there to ascertain the name, family, and residence of the stranger. Corvino had not been one day in Naples,

before an accidental meeting in the street convinced him so strong a similitude could only exist between a father and a son; while a ring, which he inadvertently wore on his finger, with the same arms he recollected to have observed on a locket tied round the neck of Eloise, proved, that he was, in reality, the object of his search; after tracing him to his abode, and gaining all the information he could, he returned to Zanotti, with sufficient evidence to induce him to take speedy and decisive measures.

He now, therefore, reported to the brotherhood, that business of the greatest importance called him to the city; and after regretting that any worldly cares should have power to force him from his holy retreat, assured them his sojourn would be as brief

brief as possible; and then mounting his horse, set forwards with the utmost haste towards Naples: arrived early in the afternoon, he took up his residence exactly opposite to the dwelling of de Volange; and had not been there two hours, ere he saw him pass the threshold, and walk slowly towards the bay. Instantly the ready contriver penned the foregoing letter, which, having sent after him, he retired to his own chamber, to rid himself of his monastic habit; and, in the dress of a layman, awaited with some impatience the midnight hour; while de Volange, equally anxious, had repaired to the appointed rendezvous, regardless of danger, and callous (in the hope of punishing the murderer of his revered parent,) to every peril that could befal him.

He had not arrived long, before he perceived a tall, majestic figure, coming towards him; a long black cloak covered his whole person, while a hat of the same nearly concealed a countenance, whose peculiarity of expression yet shone through the darkness of the night and the disguise in which he strove to envelope it.

"It is long past midnight," he cried, in the same emphatic, hollow tone, which, on the portentous Eve of San Pietro, struck coward trepidation to the soul of Moraldi; "and one fleeting hour is all the space allotted for me, to do the work of retribution. Witness you great Heaven!" continued the hypocrite, "and you ye hosts of shining kingdoms, by no private pique, no selfish malice, have *I* been actuated to put the means of justice

justice in your power. Marquis de Volange, I know thee well; and in Moraldi di Morano will prove the seducer of thy sister, and the assassin of thy father! If, however, years of long captivity, if oppression and disappointment, have so deadened thy feelings, as to render thee indifferent to the injuries thou hast sustained"——

"If!" interrupted de Volange; "and can you for a moment imagine I would hesitate to take a fair and honourable revenge?"

"Honourable!" returned Ubaldo, while a smile of involuntary contempt past over his features; "let honour contend with honour; fraud and villainy must meet their equals, upon equal terms!" At this moment, the Mar-

chese, leagued with the infamous di Montebino, is prepared to crush you: the consternation with which your unexpected appearance inspired him at the Conte's assembly," (de Volange started,) "has induced him to watch your footsteps, and discover the place of your retreat. Even on a bare suspicion have they resolved on your death; and I scarcely know whether my interference is not already too late. De Volange, I loved your sister, honourably loved her; the treachery of Morano stole her from me; while her child, her lovely daughter, now immured within a gloomy prison, pines the victim of inhuman tyranny; and the son of Morano, unknowing"——

"Hold!" interrupted de Volange, his whole frame trembling with emotion;

tion; "you need go no further, to drive me to madness, to desperation!"

"TAKE," continued Zanotti, "this key; it opens to the ruined apartments of Morano castle, where your niece is now imprisoned; mark well my directions, and you shall readily obtain sufficient evidence, to bring Morano to an open and public conviction. View these characters," he added, drawing the manuscript of Eloise from under the folds of his garment; "and this," shewing the dagger on which rusted the blood of de Cleance; "and when, by awakening the conscience of the Marchese, thou shalt have obtained convincing proofs of *his* guilt and my integrity, then shall we meet again; and these

dumb, but damning witnesses, be thine own."

"I AM already convinced!" exclaimed de Volange, his eye wildly gazing on the dagger; "I need no other witnesses."

"BUT *I* must be satisfied," said Ubaldo, haughtily; "and can only be so, by your seeking in the castle of Morano further corroborations."

HE now proceeded, with all the art and subtlety of which he was master, to assure him his name and rank were already suspected by the Marchese and Montebino, who had both resolved to deprive him treacherously of life; while, (such was the power and influence

fluence of Morano,) that unless *he* obtained the most incontrovertible proofs of his crime, his cause would be defeated, and himself exposed to all the malice and vengeance of his implacable enemies; as also his gaining entrance into the castle was the only means of preserving the injured Viola from the persecutions of her inhuman father; and the untimely fate, which, in all probability, awaited her, from his fears of her becoming the wife of his son.

Under these impressions, de Volange at length consented to adopt the measures of his unknown adviser; which were, disguised as a religious, to hover round the castle, and note every action of its infamous possessor; the key given him by Ubaldo would gain him entrance through a con-

cealed door, leading from the old chapel into the apartments of his niece, over whom he was to keep the strictest watch, while the expected arrivals of the Marchese and Montebino, would speedily ensure his just triumph and success.

"When the destined moment arrives," continued Ubaldo, "you will behold me again; without my aid you can do nothing; and it is only by observing my directions, that you will obtain it; be steady and remember."——Saying these words, he drew his garments close around him, and was soon beyond sight of the wondering Marquis, who almost began to think he had been holding converse with a being of immortal agency.

De Volange, it then was, who, shrouded

shrouded in the sable vestments of a Monk, made so strong and awful an impression on the mind of Albenza, while assisted by some terrific deceptions, conveyed to him by Ubaldo, he so compleatly awakened every feeling of horror and remorse in the mind of the Marchese, as scarcely to require any stronger evidence of his guilt; there too, had he listened to the soft complaints of Viola; and he it was, whose light reflected from the northern turret, had, on the night before she quitted her melancholy prison, caused her so much consternation and alarm. It was on the evening of Albenza's marriage and disappearance, that Ubaldo once more stood before him; for, as de Volange sat in an attitude of pensive meditation, in the old chapel, he was astonished, on raising his head, to perceive the same

tall figure contemplating him at some distance; in one hand he held the bloody dagger; while, with the other, he extended the papers of Eloise.

"De Volange," he cried, in a low and solemn tone, "the hour is now arrived; take these," he added, giving them into the hands of the Marquis, "and hasten to the city; then, when you have deposited them in the possession of the Magistrate, accuse of murder the Marchese di Morano, and await patiently the sequel; if these are not sufficient to convict him, cite as your witness, one Corvino, late his servant."——Saying this, he disappeared in a moment, leaving de Volange gazing with harrowed eyes on the crimsoned dagger; it was, indeed, rusted with the life-blood of de Cleance, while the name of

of Moraldi di Albenza appeared deeply engraven on the hilt. After musing some time on the awful and extraordinary events which marked his house's destiny, he laid aside his disguise, and hastened towards the wood, where, in the care of a peasant, who dwelt on the outskirts, he had left his horse.

THE night was dark and lowering; the moon obscured by a thick and watery cloud; and the solemn stillness which reigned over all, cast an unusual depression on the spirits of de Volange; almost absorbed in reflection, he rode along, unconscious of the way, when turning the angle of a narrow path, he distinguished the groans of a person apparently in the agonies of pain and dissolution; he listened for some time, to discover whence

whence the sounds proceeded, and found at last, that they came from a deep and muddy ditch, which lay close under the hedge, by the road side; instantly spurring his horse, a few paces brought him to the view of a man, wounded and weltering in his blood: he flew towards him, raised and supported his head upon his knee; one large gash was cut across his forehead, while another, just below the heart, proved he had not long to suffer. De Volange now filled his hat with water, from a spring that run close by, which somewhat restoring him, he raised his eyes to the countenance of his preserver. What, however, were the sensations of the Marquis, when he recognised the features of Montebino! almost involuntarily he shrunk from him, while a deep convulsive sigh burst from his heart,

heart, and he could only exclaim, "My father! my murdered father!"

"Oh!" cried the dying sinner, in stifled accents, "that I could hope there is no world beyond this; that I could but now behold that injured man, that wronged de Volange! then would I own my crimes, and die in peace:—Peace!" he added, his whole frame writhing with the torture of his wounds, from which the blood now flowed faster, "Oh! there is none for me!—Hell!—thou art waiting to receive me!——Fiends—to tear my vitals, to gnaw upon my soul!"

"Behold, then, thou erring and ungrateful friend," said the Marquis, again tendering that assistance which a momentary impulse had caused him to withdraw, "Louis de Volange, the son

son of that mild, beneficent being, who now looks down from his abode of happiness, to pardon and forgive his enemy."

MONTEBINO once more lifted his dying eyes to the face of the Marquis, and having gazed on it for a few moments, faintly articulated, "Art thou indeed that virtuous sufferer? and canst thou forbear to curse me? Oh! de Volange," he added, placing his hand upon his smarting wound, while the cold drops of agony and death bedewed his mutilated forehead, "thou art indeed revenged! behold me dying—cut off with all my sins upon my head, and going—horrible, blasting prospect, to appear before that God whom I dare not venture to implore!"

"CHECK," replied the Marquis mildly, "these violent emotions, and hope,

hope, unhappy man, that your dreadful end pleads as an atonement for your past life, and that your late, and I trust sincere repentance, will expiate your offences; receive, di Montebino, my forgiveness, and in mine the forgiveness of my father; in the grave let your errors be forgotten, and may I so obtain remission of my sins in the world to come, as I now freely pardon yours!"

"GENEROUS, noble de Volange!" exclaimed the guilty sufferer, "I know not how to thank thee; but if a wretch like me shall dare to supplicate, bless—bless him, mighty Heaven! Oh mercy, mercy!" he cried, his words growing more inarticulate between every pause; "pardon—Oh! de Volange!—mercy!"————He now gave one convulsive catch, and clenching with his crimsoned

crimsoned hands the arm of the Marquis, uttered a low groan, and expired.

It appears that Montebino, on the morning of his daughter's nuptials, received intelligence from one of the many spies whom he kept in employ, that it was reported Louis de Volange had escaped from prison, and was hastening to France, to claim his rights, and bring his oppressor to justice; this news was soon after confirmed by another messenger, averring, that a man who had been one of his former guards in the Spanish territory, had seen him a very few days since. Montebino, alarmed at these tidings, resolved, as soon as possible after the marriage was solemnized, to depart for that kingdom, and by immediately securing the person of de Volange, prevent

prevent any reports gaining ground to his own disadvantage. In consequence of this determination, he left the castle of Morano in the middle of the night, and fearful of creating suspicion, and frustrating his designs, set out unattended: attacked by ruffians in the wood, they plundered him of every thing he had about him, and after giving him a mortal wound in the side, decamped with the horse, leaving him in the dreadful condition from which he was succoured by the humanity of the man whose destruction he at that moment had been planning.

CHAP. III.

"O treach'rous conscience————
—— See, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault,
And her dread diary with horror fills."

YOUNG.

"Ere, to black Hecat's summons,
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note."

SHAKESPEARE.

WHEN the Marchese rushed frantic in desperation from the chamber of Lorenzo, his last words to Bernardo had been an order to secure the women; the steward, however, who had long been

been acquainted with the secret purposes of his Lord, and who now foresaw the downfal of his plans, (while the mysterious words of Gradisca filled him with alarm and consternation,) thought it better to provide for his own safety by flight, and in consequence, after throwing the body of the hapless Lorenzo into the sack he had brought for the purpose, immediately left the cottage, resolving to conceal himself in the city till time developed the sequel. Pale, trembling, and affrighted, not daring to speak, and almost fearing to turn their anxious eyes, had Viola and her companion remained, in a situation to which words can but ill do justice, till the morning's dawn, when the arrival of Father Jerome, going his accustomed charitable rounds, relieved their fears, and whispered comfort to their wounded spirits; gladly did they

accept his offer of seeking refuge in the monastery, where he promised them an immediate temporary assylum; and while Gradisca bathed the bleeding form of Lorenzo with her tears, she inwardly vowed that her entrance within its charitable walls should be the period of that heavy secret which had so long preyed upon the peace of her existence; the period, however, of her miserable days, was also soon destined to find its close, for the agitation of her mind, her long suffering, and the want and hardships she had endured, brought on the symptoms of a fever, which, in three hours after her arrival, ended in one of very alarming appearance. Viola, whose feelings had likewise sustained a severe shock, and whose heart was rent with sorrow for the untimely fate of Lorenzo, and anxiety for that of her lover, (for Jerome

rome had informed her of his being missing,) yet strove to acquire fortitude, and exercise every office of kindness and sympathy towards the unhappy woman, whose disorder was now rapidly increasing, and who raved in every delirious paroxysm on the name of Lorenzo, declaring that he was the true son of the Marchese di Morano, and that Albenza was the offspring of Bertoldo!

Jerome, who was convinced some fatal secret, relative to the Albenzi family, prest heavy on her mind, sent instantly for the Father Zanotti, who, as being Confessor to the Marchese, he thought the most proper person to seek her confidence: what, however, was the consternation of the whole fraternity, on being told by the porter, that in a short time after he had ad-

mitted a stranger to his presence, the Abbate had past the gate in seeming agitation; and on his immediately proceeding to seek the man who had apparently caused his sudden flight, he found the cell empty, and the stranger gone also!

Jerome, whose conjectures had never been favourable either to the Marchese or the Abbate, after recommending the dying woman to the care of Viola, was hastening as fast as possible to the castle, when he was summoned to the sick chamber by a message from Gradisca, whose returning reason convinced her she had but a short time to live, and who now requested a private interview with him. On entering her apartment, he was struck by the change which a few hours had wrought in her countenance,

while in a feeble voice she requested him to approach the bed, and receive her last confession.

"It is well known," she said, in accents frequently broken by pain and emotion, "that from having been tolerably educated, and the daughter of a respectable tenant on my Lord's estate, I was, when taken into the service of his wife, treated with more condescension and respect than is usually shewn to menial attendants; I was about her person from the day of her marriage, and surely never was there a better friend, or more gracious mistress, than she was to me. Well do I remember, that on the fatal day of the Marchese's death, she complained in the morning of an unusual depression on her spirits, and after relating a dream that had much affected her, said

to me, "Gradisca, should I not get over my approaching confinement, and my child is left without a mother, do you then guard his infancy with tender care; preserve him from dangers; teach him to love the memory of his parent, and to adore and revere his father as fervently as I have done." I endeavoured as much as possible to draw her from these melancholy thoughts, too just presentiments of the wretched fate that awaited her and her excellent Lord. The dreadful news of his death had scarcely reached her, ere she entirely lost her senses; his crimsoned garments were held closely to her heart, nor did she long survive him, or the birth of her unfortunate infant: Let me hasten to a conclusion of my narrative, lest the hand of death cut short my purpose, and prevent me doing justice to the memory of those departed

departed angels, when I declare Rinaldo di Albenza, the supposed son of the present Marchese, to be the offspring of my late Lord Bertoldo, and his true and rightful heir: Listen, Holy Father," she continued, seeing the Friar was about to interrupt her, "and hear me again protest, that Lorenzo, the murdered Lorenzo, fell by the hands of his own father, and was the child of Moraldi and Juliana!"

"MERCIFUL Providence!" exclaimed Jerome, raising his uplifted hands to Heaven, "how inscrutable are all thy ways!"

"AYE," cried Gradisca, looking towards Viola, who stood transfixed in speechless wonder, "in me you behold one more weak than wicked; a woman, who, though she dared not

contend against the power of a successful tyrant, yet, by stratagem, preserved a birthright and inheritance to the child of her beloved master.

"You may possibly have heard," she continued, "that the day which consigned my Lord and Lady to their untimely graves, the Signiora Juliana was delivered of a son; and it seemed, indeed, that while Heaven, for its own wise purposes, permitted a fratricide (for such I have ever thought him,) to exist with impunity, it favoured also my designs for the preservation of infant innocence. The nurse who was to have attended the wife of Morano, fell so ill, a short time before her confinement, that she was unable to be with her, and it was agreed I should fill her place; her rooms were contiguous to the Marchesa's,

chesa's, and after having administered some medicine to the Lady Juliana, and hushed her infant to sleep, I returned to the chamber of my newly departed mistress, where I had not been three minutes, before the door was softly opened, and the Signior di Morano entered: "Gradisca," he cried, turning with a look of horror from the yet warm body of my Lady, "listen to what I have to say; either witness the instant death of the infant before you, or swear, by every thing binding on earth, to take him quickly from the castle, and rear him as your own; he is a serpent in my way:—Hesitate—your own fate, and his immediate destruction, are the consequences: it is easily in your power," continued the monster, "to comply with my wishes, as I have forbidden every one admittance to this chamber but yourself."

"But, my Lord!" I exclaimed, will not the household have suspicions as"——

"Curse their suspicions!" he furiously interrupted; "dare any one question the conduct of the Marchese di Morano? You must report him dead," he added in a softer tone, "and to-morrow night secretly convey him to the dwelling of Corvino; he will then conduct you to a cottage I have fixed on for your future residence in Terra di Lavora, where, mark me, your every action will be watched and noted; and if you prove unfaithful, dread my vengeance!"——What could I do? Alas! weak, helpless, trembling, I consented; but, oh mighty God! who in that perilous hour didst impart thy grace to thy frail and ignorant servant, I darted to the chamber of the sleeping

sleeping Juliana, exchanged the children, and Morano reared the offspring of his brother as his own! How I have been persecuted, what I have endured, you both well know: the unhappy accident which deprived the poor Lorenzo of his senses, was a plausible excuse for the Marchese (to whom he never ceased to be a terror and a dread,) to immure him for life; while, alas! the prospect of his recovery only, I fear, precluding that plan, sealed the doom which for ever put a period to his life and sufferings."

HERE she ceased to speak, while her auditors remained absorbed in mute attention; and scarcely had the heads of her deposition been taken down by the Father Jerome, and witnessed by Viola, and two of the brotherhood,

than her spirit fled, and she sunk gently on the bosom of her Maker.

That Morano had been the guilty assassin of his brother, seems almost unnecessary now to add: covetous of his wealth, jealous of his superiority, and envious of the happiness he enjoyed in being the husband of Antonia, he imparted his every feeling to the subtle Ubaldo, who almost anticipating his wishes, only replied to his complaints and discontented comparisons, by prompting the ready means of making those blessings his own. How easily he was persuaded to execute the atrocious act, is already known; nor ever, from the time of Lorenzo's approaching to manhood, did Ubaldo cease to represent him as a dangerous obstacle in his way, as a proof it was always

always in the power of Gradisca to bring forward against him, and a barrier to that security which he only could ensure by his death. A transient sensation of remorse and pity, had induced him to spare, in infancy, his helpless innocence, while a sentiment, nearly allied to the same, would have led him rather to prefer his lasting imprisonment, than to again embruing his hands in guiltless blood; but his probable recovery, together with the constant and artful instigations of Ubaldo, at length, however, succeeded in the commission of another deed of horror, which, while ridding him, as he thought, of the hated offspring of Bertoldo, was blasting him still deeper in iniquity, by making him the murderer of his own child.

When Zanotti left the cell, the

Marchese sunk to the earth in a paroxysm of raving and despair; he imprecated curses on himself; he scattered his hair around the apartment, as with feelings that tortured his soul, he perused the narrative of Eloise: that Viola was his child, that the cherished object of his son's affections should prove his own offspring, rushed like a torrent on his brain, and drove him to madness;—now he sunk upon his trembling knees—now in broken and suffocated accents he called upon the name of his Maker, on that Maker he had denied; on the God he had profaned, did he now, humbled to the dust, supplicate for speedy annihilation; he felt about for some instrument of destruction, but Zanotti had secured his dagger, and he looked towards the small high window of the cell as the only means of escaping from the dreadful

and

and ignominious death to which he was assured Zanotti had gone to betray him. To venture through the passages, and run the chance of being stopt, and questioned by the porter, was impossible; and while in every echo of the blast he fancied the followers of justice at his heels, he mounted to the window, and springing from it, fell on a bank raised high under the walls of the monastery. His horse was still grazing by the road side, but where to seek a refuge he knew not; had he one friend? was there one being in that world, where through life he had been courted and flattered, who would receive and shelter him in the hour of adversity? He looked towards the cottages of his lowly tenants, slumbering in peace and innocence, and then cast them in agony on himself; tears, burning tears, of anguish and remorse, coursed down

his haggard cheeks, as he struck his hand upon his heart, and asked himself, Whither could he go? To stay, however, was death; to return to his castle, destruction: he had no doubt but that Ubaldo was gone to give the dreaded information; and while he remembered the bloody dagger in his possession, he knew his only hopes rested on flight. At this moment, Corvino, and his castle in Abruzzo, rushed to his mind; there he might be concealed till the intentions of Ubaldo were known, or he had again been induced to relinquish his hostile designs. Oh! dreadful lesson to vice and profligacy! even in the man he had fostered and supported, was he destined to find but another evidence of his offences, another powerful accuser!

"SAVE me!" cried the wretched Marchese, as faint, sinking, and breathless, he alighted the next evening at the door of Corvino's cottage; "save me from my pursuers! hide me from myself!"

"WHETHER I can save you from your pursuers, my Lord," replied Corvino in a sullen tone, "time must prove; and as for hiding you from your own thoughts, why that's what I cannot do for myself."

"OH Corvino!" replied the Marchese, wiping the dust and perspiration from his forehead, "look upon thy master—view these tears—these agonies of bitterness and sorrow; behold me madly prostrate at your feet, and say you will not save me! Traitor!" he vociferated, the violence of his

his nature again bursting forth, "hadst thou not been a villain marked by the hand of Nature for my purpose, I had not now needed thy assistance!" He threw himself to the earth, and groaned aloud.

"You know you can be hid in some of the vaults of the castle," replied the man, without attempting to alleviate his sufferings; "none would think to seek you there; suspicion has been too much abroad of late, and"——

"Oh horror! horror!" groaned the Marchese, covering his face with his hands.

"If you will venture it, then," continued Corvino, "I am willing to conduct you; and if, which I conclude is the case, you fear the officers of justice,

tice, they may hunt a good while before they will find you out there, I warrant me."

He now took the lamp, and, followed by the trembling Marchese, proceeded down a small trap-door, curiously cut in the flooring of the apartment, and having securely bolted it after them, they proceeded down a deep flight of steps, at the foot of which were several long and dark stone passages; the damp was dripping from the walls, while a bad noxious vapour issued from every fresh door they opened. When they gained the end of the passages, Corvino drew a large key from his pocket, and applying it to a close narrow grating, told the Marchese he was now in his own castle.

Morano shuddered, as he enquired of

of Corvino by what means he had acquired a knowledge of this subterraneous communication, never before known to its possessors.

He answered, it had been cut in former days, for the better security of prisoners brought there in time of war, and for the purpose of exercising various cruelties and persecutions. "I discovered it," he added, "by mere chance; and whenever it has been necessary for me to visit the castle, have made use of it to prevent a more troublesome and tedious circuit." After crossing a variety of dungeons, and exploring a long and dreary way, Corvino applying another key much larger and half-broken in its wards, told the Marchese he thought this would prove a certain place of safety; "and the next to it," he added, "is one I do not

not much like to enter; for I have heard strange noises there of late; and between ourselves, there is but too much reason to"——

"Hush!" exclaimed the Marchese, catching him by the arm, "I hear it now."

"Pooh," answered Corvino, that's only the wind," making his way at the same time towards the door; "it has a hollow and a fearful sound round these old walls."

"Mean you thus to leave me without a light, without a fire, or any cheering sustenance to support me in these gloomy horrors?" said Morano.

"The light is on yon stone, my Lord,"

Lord," answered the ruffian, pointing to a lamp he had placed just before him, "and I will go seek some materials for the fire."

"I ALMOST dread to stay," said Morano, in a cowardly tremulous tone; "my very shadow tortures me."

"How have I borne it, then," replied Corvino, "whose every year has been spent beneath its dreary horrors?" Saying these words, he left the dungeon, but soon returned with a large bundle of wood, a flask of wine, and some cold provisions. Here, then, after detaining his companion as long as he could, was the Marchese once more left to all the miseries of a frightful solitude, and his own harrowing reflections: fatigue, however,

ever, together with long want of rest, at length so completely overpowered him, that, after trimming his lamp, and kindling a cheerful blaze, he threw himself on the mattrass, and endeavoured to court oblivion. Long was it ere it answered to his summons; and even then, the same fearful dream that had occasioned the agitation related by the Father Jerome, when, some years back, he visited his castle, tortured his sleeping fancy; twice he started, and thought the forms of de Cleance and his brother were standing close beside him, while every howling of the blast sounded as the groans of the departed; and every movement of the massy door on its hinges blanched his cheek with timid superstition. At length something like tranquillity was stealing over him, when again he started from his pillow, and imagined he

he heard a low and rustling noise issue from the dungeon mentioned by Corvino; a cold shivering spread through his whole frame, as hastily he rose and approached the door; but all was hush; and once more was he returning to his mattrass, when a low groan, followed by a heavy trampling of feet, struck like frenzy on his brain; Morano was petrified; horror and consternation chained him to the spot; he tried to speak, but his voice failed, and he was just sinking to the earth, when the door was violently burst open, and Albenza, pale and agitated, rushed forward into the dungeon, followed by Zanotti; his looks were disordered; his long fine hair partly shaded his wan countenance, while the rest, torn and dishevelled, was scattered over his shoulders; one arm was bared in the conflict, while the other extended towards

wards Ubaldo in an attitude of defence. The Marchese still remained motionless, and bereft of every faculty, while Ubaldo stood with his regards bent on a form which now issued from the opening, and struck horror unspeakable to the soul of Morano; it was the shade of Bertoldo, 'of ashy semblance, meagre, pale and bloodless;' he stood erect before them; a long black covering enfolded his skeleton form, and his arms were crossed upon his bosom.

"CHILDREN of sin and iniquity!" he cried, in a deep and hollow tone of voice, and Albenza bent involuntarily at his feet, "desist your bloody warfare, and"———

"NEVER!" interrupted the fearless Ubaldo,

Ubaldo, springing forward; "never! though hell itself should rise, and gape between us, thus would I rush on my revenge; thus would I strike, and tell this coward heart, it is a *Brother's* hand now sends it to perdition!"

"Oh, save him! save my brother!" exclaimed the fancied spectre, flying towards him; "it is Bertoldo bids Moraldi live! Save, and forgive him, powerful Heaven!" It was, however, too late, the dagger of Ubaldo was deep buried in the breast of the Marchese; and he was just rushing to the door, when Corvino, with Father Jerome, entered the dungeon.

"Help me to seize that dreadful, damned villain!" exclaimed Albenza, darting

darting to the entrance, and forcibly detaining him, "he has slain my father!"

"YOUNG man," said Jerome, as Corvino caught the arm of Ubaldo, "behold thy father there," pointing to the emaciated being, who supported the now dying Marchese; "and in the long-suffering and persecuted di Albenza, greet a virtuous parent!"

"BERTOLDO!" cried Morano, his eye glaring on the form beside him, "art thou come to torment me before my time? What meant that bloody man? he said he was my brother!"

"AYE, thy father's son," replied Ubaldo. "Now, Moraldi, remember the Eve of San Pietro; remember, that to fulfil an oath made by the pillow,

the flinty pillow of a dying parent, did I consent to bear the burthen of an existence, commenced in disgrace, and nurtured in misfortune; that oath is now accomplished, and I am revenged; thy wretched life has been my vengeance; thy lingering miseries and thy mental pangs, were all as breath of transport to my soul, which glutted on the sufferings of an Albenza; and if ever a touch of pity chanced to cross me; if ever compassion tried to force its passage, I thought upon the anguish of my only parent, and my heart was steeled again.

"LEAD me hence," he continued, proudly turning to the guards, who had followed Corvino into the dungeon; "I am Ubaldo, and know how to suffer." Saying these words, he surrendered himself into the custody of the officers, and

and with a firm step and unruffled countenance, left the apartment.

Some reviving cordial was now administered to Morano, who being placed upon the mattrass, was briefly informed by the Monk of Gradisca's confession, and presented with her dying deposition, while Albenza threw his arms round the neck of his real father, and testified his pleasure in tears of silent gratitude. Of the wonderful appearance of that father, after he had so long been supposed buried in the tomb, it is now necessary to enter on some explanation.

On receiving the stiletto of Corvino in his bosom, he lay for some moments upon the shore, apparently motionless and bereft of life; it was then that a remorse, which became the misery of

his future existence, filled the breast of his murderer; and while he gazed in terror on the deed he had committed, imagination painted the double forms of de Cleance and Bertoldo calling down eternal vengeance on his head; as he knelt in this state by the side of the body, he fancied he perceived it move; could he but save, though to doom him to perpetual confinement, would be at least some remission of his crimes, and consequently alleviate the tortures of his conscience. He put his hand to his heart and felt it beat: in a word, after using every restorative, he conveyed him home to his cottage, where he shortly recovered; his wound, though deep, was not dangerous, and a state of extreme weakness was all the bodily inconvenience he endured; while, on the same day that Moraldi left the castle for Naples, this unhappy

victim

victim of a brother's treachery was confined by Corvino in the dark and lonesome cell, where for so many years he supported his miserable being, shut out from light, from love, from happiness; unkowing of the fate of his wife, of the existence of his child, he yet resolved to live, and bear with fortitude his harsh and unmerited doom. The secret of his existence was one Corvino never entrusted even to Ubaldo; yet an all-directing hand held the thread of Bertoldo's destiny; and the imprisonment of the young Albenza in the subterraneous vault, was the signal for the deliverance of his father.

Bent on the destruction of every branch of that family, the still living embers of his love to her mother, had induced Ubaldo to spare the innocent Viola; and, as the gloomy state of

Albenza's spirits would readily favour the idea of his having fallen a self inflicted death, he took the first opportunity of seizing and confining him in the castle of Abruzzo, of whose secret passages and windings he had long possessed the most thorough knowledge; and here he resolved to conceal his victim, till the period arrived for the completion of his revenge; a revenge doubly strengthened by the attempt of Morano to give him poison; and when, on awakening from his slumber, he once more saw his arm lifted for his destruction, he hastened from the Monastery, determining instantly to perpetrate the murder of di Albenza, then curse his father with the intelligence; and while acknowledging his motives, and discovering his name and origin, inhumanly triumph over the cowardly wretch, who was still too much in his power

power to dare betray or punish him. Ubaldo was soon enabled to put his diabolical scheme in train; and when Albenza was wildly exploring the wood, and calling loudly on the dreadful phantom, whose mission he so anxiously sought to investigate, he was seized by four men, who had long been in watch for a convenient opportunity, bound, hand-cuffed, and with his eyes covered, was hurried into a close carriage, and quickly conveyed to the solitary dungeons of the castle, where the appearance of Zanotti through a secret pannel door, left him no longer a doubt as to whom he owed his confinement. Regularly were his provisions brought by one of the ruffians who had assisted in securing him; his visits were always at night, and managed by means of the same secret opening, which on his first arrival had

admitted him a transient view of Zanotti.

It was during this period that Corvino, in visiting his wretched captive, had heard the moanings of Albenza, while that any human being should occasion them he thought impossible, and his already terrified imagination instantly conjured them into the dying groans of the injured de Cleance. The thought was insupportable, and Corvino, after a night of sleepless horror, hastened to the city, determining that no persuasion should now deter him from a confession of the murder, trusting to his preservation of the Marchese di Albenza, as an extenuation of his offences, and a plea to hope for pardon. On his road, however, being seized with sudden indisposition, he was obliged to stop at the gates of the Monas-

Monastery, which presented a ready prospect of assistance; it proved to be that of Zanotti, which, from his never choosing to meet him within view of its inhabitants, for fear of creating suspicion, was unknown to him: most fortunately the priest who attended him was the good Father Jerome, and to him Corvino made a full avowal of all those circumstances which prest heavy on his conscience: in consequence, the Monk instantly laid an information against Zanotti, whose struggle it was with Albenza, which reaching the ears of his captive father (and the door of his cell being but slightly fastened), caused him to enter that of his son just time enough to so far alarm the villain as to retard the blow raised against the life of Albenza.

The guilty Morano did not survive

his wound many hours; and while we pass over the last scene of an Atheist and a Murderer, it is sufficient to add, that he died as he had lived; struggling for existence to the last, his only hope seemed in the prospect of recovery; his internal horrors communicated distortion to his countenance, and while incapable of peace or consolation, his soul despaired of that mercy, which a recollection of his crimes told him he dared not supplicate.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

—— Round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
Mix'd with obdurate pride, and steadfast hate.

All is not lost; th' unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield.

MILTON.

A SUBSEQUENT part of this history mentions, that the early life of the old Marchese di Albenza had been thoughtless and licentious. After completing his education, and prosecuting his travels with some little success, he stopt for a short time at Rome, on his return to his native castle, and there, in one of the many families whom he visited,

saw, and fell desperately in love with, a young girl, who had been reared and supported as a dependant in the house of a very distant relation, whose ostentatious charity, while it extended to a public display of bounty to this their humble kinswoman, yet refused in private those more genial offices of sympathy and tenderness, which alone can soften the heavy yoke, dependance places on the neck of misfortune.

PAULINA DI VELASCO was the child of noble though unfortunate parents, and while in solitude she wept over the fate which consigned her to poverty and obscurity, she never relinquished that pride and loftiness of spirit, which had ever been the characteristic of her family, and which still burnt high within her own bosom. She was handsome, lively, and of strong understanding; but vain, haughty, and of violent passions:

sions: these were faults the gentleness of admonition might possibly have subdued; but the stern and harsh reproof, while it served to intimidate and render her deceptive, only, in the end, added fuel to the flame, more fierce from being smothered.

On such a character, the flattery and attentions of the then young and handsome di Albenza, failed not to produce their desired effect; she was young and ambitious, he, insinuating, artful, and persevering; and while she fondly trusted her beauty and accomplishments would, by raising her to the rank of his wife, restore her to that world she so ardently longed to shine in; he, on the contrary, laughed at the idea of marrying a dependant orphan, and never for a moment supposed, that a con-

duct which would not take from his reputation in society, could possibly be one he ought to blush at proceeding in: in a word, he seduced and left her, then, when too late, to ponder on her shame, to curse her betrayer, and be miserable: but while the keenest emotions filled her bosom (for she was soon driven from the only home she had ever experienced, with ignominy and revilings); yet, never did the mildness of repentant sorrow lower that haughty spirit, which followed her to the latest period of existence, and now taught her only to remember Albenza with hatred for his perfidy, malice and indignation for the ruin he had entailed on her. In an obscure lodging in the suburbs she gave birth to a son; and here some lurking feelings of compassion, and remorse for the wrongs he had

had committed, led the Marchese to seek her out, and offer her assistance.

"TELL your friend," said Paulina, as she disdainfully shewed the bearer of his message to the door of her apartment, "that the woman who is too humble to be his wife, is too proud to accept his charity; tell him," she continued, pointing with her finger to the infant who lay sleeping on a mattrass on the floor, "that, in the hour of dissolution, when the compunctious visitings of conscience shall reproach him with his treachery, that in revenge I will deprive him of the poor consolation of knowing he had administered to the smallest of our necessities."

"BY Heavens! I like that woman!" exclaimed the thoughtless coxcomb, who

who had been the embassador of the Marchese, when he returned to the convivial circle he had quitted more from curiosity than commiseration; "she is an angel!"

"A DEVIL!" answered the Marchese, filling his glass, and endeavouring to rally his spirits; "I will think no more of her."

THOU didst keep thy word, Albenza; and so did Paulina: for when stretched upon the couch of mortality, the remembrance of thy abandoned, deserted offspring sat like lead within thy breast, and banished peace from thy pillow.

IT may easily be supposed a woman of extraordinary talents, and uncommon beauty, did not long remain in that

that obscurity she had resolved to emerge from, though at the expense of every honourable principle; many years was she courted, followed, and admired; while her unbounded extravagance was as frequently the ruin of the fortunes and estates of her lovers, as her blandishments and insinuations were the destruction of their hopes and bane of their happiness. Fleeting, however, is the dominion of vice, transient the reign of dissipated pleasure; in the very zenith of her attractions, at the very height of her conquests, surrounded by adorers, and loaded with flattery, a dangerous and malignant small pox broke out in the town where she resided, and three short days completely robbed her of that fatal beauty which had been the primary source of all her misfortunes, and by whose loss she was now deprived of every means of comfort

fort and support. Vainly, on her recovery, did she again launch into the world; vainly did the robe of fashion envelope her person, or the jewel of value glitter on her bosom; the fair complexion, that till now had given lustre to its ray, was seen no longer; and the lovely bloom of health and freshness which once was rapture to the eye, only served to create stronger feelings of disgust towards the artificial substitute, to which she still fondly trusted: it is true, her splendid equipage yet blazoned through the city, but she filled it wretched and alone; her box was still the most conspicuous at she opera, but it no longer contained attraction for the men; it was now but the scene of solitary mortification to herself, a mark for each wounding shaft of female triumph and malignity, and she left it in disdain and despair, execrating

crating the name of her seducer, and detesting the whole race of mankind. Her resources daily diminishing, she soon found it necessary to remove, with her son, a boy of fourteen years old, to a small cheap lodging in the outskirts of the city. Here it was, that reflections, dreadful, corroding reflections, resumed their torturing power; in agony she gazed upon her child; that child, on whom Nature had lavished her richest treasures of talent and beauty: but those gifts were neglected, those talents misapplied; and the rare endowments, which, if trained to proper uses, had rendered him an ornament to society, and a blessing to himself, turned into an impure channel, became a current of vice, and only the means of exercising a superiority of wickedness on his fellow-creatures.

Ere

Ere he was of an age to distinguish between the course of right and wrong, his morals were corrupted by bad example; his principles, by licentious conversation; and his mind nurtured into prematurity of sense and understanding, by the men of wit and genius, who regularly frequented his mother's parties, was initiated also into every species of art, profligacy, and impropriety, which too often casts a cloud over the abilities they possess. Inattention to the fulfilment of religious duties, on the part of his mother, soon created a contempt for it on his; and to the admiration with which he listened to the eloquent sophistry of those by whom he was surrounded, was soon added the desire of emulating their conduct, and adopting their sentiments. To an uncommon quickness of apprehension was combined

bined a wish and power of acquirement, far beyond his age; and while the hereditary vanity of his character was flattered by the praise and eulogiums of his astonished hearers, his pride, of which he had an unbounded share, was daily strengthened by the precepts and example of his mother, whose masculine and vindictive nature now looked forward, with eager hope, to that period when the courage of her darling son should exercise in deed, that resolution her own malignant mind had long conceived and panted for. Such were the beings, who, now overwhelmed with poverty, disgrace, and disappointment, were wandering from place to place, and subsisting on the scanty pittance earned by the industry of the fallen Paulina, and the labour of her son, whom she was yet determined to see perishing with want and

and famine, rather than ask assistance from the man, who had refused, by making her his wife, to repair that injury for which she unceasingly called down vengeance on his head.

"UBALDO," said his mother, (for it was by that name she called him,) as he returned one evening from the city, after taking home the work she had finished in the day, "your stay has made me miserable; you have been gone these four hours, and I feared some accident had happened you; tell me, my boy, my only comfort, am I not in the right?"

"I CANNOT call that misfortune," rejoined the youth, while his strong features crimsoned with indignation, "which has given me an opportunity of chastising one who had insulted me."

me." Paulina caught him to her heart, while, in accents of triumphant fondness, she intreated him to explain what had happened.

"As I was returning home," replied Ubaldo, "sad and despairing, from your employers, (for, my dearest mother, they have now no longer work to give you,) I happened, and trust me by the merest chance, to brush past a very young Signior, who was walking close beside me, and occasioned him to slip, and slightly hurt his foot: I apologised for what I had done, and then supposing this was enough, walked quietly on; when he followed, and after abusing me in the grossest manner, struck me a blow upon the cheek: this was too much, I sprung forward, and with one stroke laid him motionless at my feet. Again I left

I left him, for I was then revenged," he added, while a look of triumph lighted up his whole countenance, "and was satisfied; when, to my utter astonishment, I found myself seized in a moment, by two servants in costly liveries, and then distinguished the effeminate voice of the Signior, commanding his followers to bear me home, where I should be severely punished for my audacity. What could I do? in vain I struggled, for I disdained to supplicate; and, therefore, was forcibly dragged to a large palace, belonging, as I found, to a nobleman, whose wife was cousin to the boy I was accused of insulting. My heart burnt within me, when I found myself placed in the middle of a magnificent apartment, before the Lord and Lady of the mansion; and there, after hearing the circumstance stated in the falsest

falsest manner, by my accuser, I was asked by the Marchese, what I had to say in my defence? I told him every particular, briefly as it happened: he seemed satisfied, and all the time I spoke, regarded me in the most earnest manner.

"You have been in the wrong, young man," he then said, addressing himself to his kinsman, who now seemed overwhelmed with confusion; "and I desire you will not only apologise to this youth for your behaviour, but, by presenting him the rich bauble you wear upon your finger, atone, in some measure, for the wrong you have done him."

"You are unjust, my Lord!" exclaimed the Marchesa, darting a look of contempt towards her husband, and

another of fury at me; "rather ought you instantly to command your people to bind and chastise the insolence, which dared even retort upon a branch of an illustrious family."

"GIVE him the ring, instantly!" returned the Marchese."

"DID you take it?" eagerly interrupted Paulina.

"No," replied the boy, "I would have died first! I threw it on the carpet, and then without any one's attempting to follow me, left the palace." His mother again folded him to her bosom, as she demanded the name of this imperious family.

"I ENQUIRED," replied Ubaldo, "and found it was di ALBEN"——

"ZA!"

"ZA!" shrieked the agonized Paulina; "Great God! it was thy"—— she stopt, recollected herself; for had she not inwardly vowed, never till the hour of her death to communicate to her child the name of his father?"

THE loss of her employment was now soon followed by an illness, occasioned from the agitation of her mind, and the lurking weakness attendant on her late disorder. Stretched upon the couch of disease and suffering, parched with fever, frenzied with despair, her brain was almost turning; the rent was due for her lodging; her clothes had long been exchanged for the money, which, from the time she had been deprived of work, had, with the hard and daily labour of Ubaldo, entirely supported them; her jewels, together

with the furniture of her house in Naples, had been all sold on quitting it, for the payment of one large debt; and she now looked round on her empty chamber, on the famished persons of herself and child, with horror indescribable. It was now the all-powerful claims of nature, and the agonizing pain she endured, enough subdued that inordinate pride of disposition, as to induce her, after many hours past without the smallest nourishment, to supplicate assistance from the woman at whose house she resided. "I have too many children of my own," was the worldly answer, "than to take upon me to feed any more hungry mouths."

"She quits my lodgings this very night," rejoined her husband, a fat bloated devotee, who went regularly

to

to mass, worshipped every Saint in the calendar, and called himself a good catholic; "I shall employ her son no longer in working in my garden, and grateful ought she to be to me, that I do not put her in gaol for the rent that is due."

"She had better go back to Naples, to her fine house and fine carriages," said a little shrivelled thin woman, who had just called in to have what she termed 'an hour's chat,' or, more properly speaking, an hour's defamation of her neighbours.

"Why, my dear souls," she added, drawing her chair, with an air of importance, close beside them, "you will lose your precious characters, by harbouring such a creature; the Lord help you! she's no other than the

famous Signiora di Velasco, who made so much noise in the city once, only the small pox has so much disfigured her, that no one would know her again."

"SANTE Marie!" exclaimed the affrighted hostess, "have I been harbouring such a miscreant under my virtuous roof?"

"HUSH wife!" said the good man, rising with lordly superiority from his seat; "she is fostered here no longer, depend upon it; Holy Virgin! the church would excommunicate me!"

ERE the evening's fall, the wretched mother, supported by her still undaunted son, was driven from the dwelling of virtue and religion; from the dwelling of a man, who that very night

night went up "into the temple," and blessed God, that he had not made him like unto "the publican and the sinner," whom he had driven forth in a cold and drizzly night, without food, without covering, and absolutely so far sinking beneath a sure and rapid decline, as only to have required but a few short days before she had gone forth for ever!!!

"CURSES on them!" cried Ubaldo, as he threw his tattered cloak around the shivering form of his almost dying parent; "may lightning from Heaven strike them! their house! their children! Oh! were I but able, this moment"——

"WHAT would you do, my boy?" interrupted Paulina, the almost dying embers of her once haughty spirit

rekindling at the idea, "what would you do?"

"WOULD murder them!" exclaimed the youth, clenching his hands, and holding his mother still tighter to his heart, "would have their blood for it!"

"WHAT then," cried Paulina, "would you to him, whose treacherous love first brought your mother into ruin, and then basely deserted her; left her with her child, a prey to remorse, to penury, to infamy; who, wedded to another, has forgotten the pining victim of his falsehood; and thinks, because the world can tolerate such perfidy, that I, a poor deluded, humbled woman, would have crouched beneath his feet, and blest that clemency which dared insult the daughter

ter of a noble house, by the offer of a paltry sum, as an atonement for the injuries he had done her?"

"I WOULD torture him!" replied Ubaldo, in a firm and steady tone; "would sacrifice my life, my soul, could I but live to bring down misery on his haughty race!"

"ENOUGH, my child!" said the sinking Paulina, "I can but little more; assist me to the steps of yonder portico; there will I rest my head, and speak further with you; but I am faint, indeed I am almost dying."

UBALDO was frantic; half starving himself, and without the power of procuring the smallest relief, he bore his mother to the marble steps, which led up to the entrance of a magnificent

villa; and spreading his almost only garment under her head, rushed forward, determining to stop the first person who past, and force assistance, though at the expense of his own life.

It was now past midnight, the air cold, the wind blew bleakly round the building, and the rain fell fast and penetrating; he darted up the spacious avenue, and called loudly on the charity of any human being, who might be within hearing; but no one answered, no one appeared; again he listened, but no sound, save the distant moanings of his expiring parent, greeted his anxious ear; and he was returning, as he imagined, to die with her, when a low rustling noise at some distance, caused him for a moment to pause, and then hastily follow the sound,

sound, which came from a kind of rivulet that meandered round the gardens of the villa; there he beheld a spaniel feeding on some crusts and broken provision, which seemed to have been thrown the refuse of the ostentatious and luxurious kitchen which belonged to it: eagerly his eye caught the welcome treasure, as he spurned away the dog, and seized on his repast; the animal looked up in his face, and then quietly smelling at the earth, tamely retreated, leaving the remainder of his meal to the starving wretch, from whom the pampered children of affluence had withheld the smallest aid! with joy unbounded, Ubaldo hastened to his mother, now, however, past assistance.

"I AM dying," she cried, "and cannot eat. Alas! I am perishing with

the cold, and the rain falls chill within my bosom."

"First it shall penetrate through mine!" cried the youth, clasping her to his breast, and supporting her head upon his shoulder; "we will die together."

"No," cried Paulina, making a violent effort to raise herself from his arms; "live to revenge thy mother!"

"Who goes there?" now interrupted a man's voice at some distance; "who lurks at this hour so near the dwelling of the Marchese di Albenza?"

"*He* is thy father!" cried Paulina, her voice trembling with emotion;

"and these flinty steps not harder than his heart."

"WHO goes there?" again demanded the man; "who and what are ye?"

"POOR travellers," answered Ubaldo; "for pity's sake relieve and succour a dying woman!"

"YOU may rest here a little while," said the sentinel, who just then passing by, threw them a small piece of money; "but I can do nothing more for you, as my own home is far from hence, and my Lady, the Marchesa, not famous for her charities."

UBALDO thanked him, put the money in his pocket, while his tears, for the first time, bedewed the cold forehead

head of his mother, on whom the hand of death seemed momentarily about to fasten.

"UBALDO," she at last articulated, "Ubaldo, knowest thou the nature, consequence, and meaning of an oath? and knowing it," she added, while every word was interrupted by the pangs of approaching dissolution, "could'st thou resolve to keep it sacredly, and fulfil it religiously?"

"PROVE me," said Ubaldo, passionately; "I am certain I understand, and will be faithful."

"THEN swear," continued Paulina, "swear solemnly, and by every thing that is dear to man, by the miseries you have endured, by this emaciated form,

form, and by this broken heart, which now bleeds drops of anguish for your future fate, to avenge my cause on the whole race of him I ne'er can call your father; and not to himself alone, but to his children; in all the plenitude and subtlety of vengeance, be it extended; let no difficulties daunt, no dangers fright you; let the education I have given, the firmness you inherit, be cultivated to this great purpose, and lead to this sole end of all your actions. Ubaldo, if ever a moment of pity strike across you; if ever, by any chance (but this I think cannot be,) you should be benefitted by that hated family, oh! let not these deter you. If thou should'st forget, if thou disregardest these my parting mandates, my wronged and murdered ghost shall nightly haunt thee; and if there is a world beyond the hated

one

one we now inhabit, shall be the first to hurl thee to despair and endless torments!" In the energy of her dreadful feelings, this wicked and deluded woman seemed to have acquired more than her wonted powers; erect and ghastly, her form looked more than human; around her sunk and haggard person clung her drenched garments; one withered hand was placed on the head of her son, while the other, raised upwards, deprecated the Heaven she profaned.

"DIDST thou mark me?" she cried, half falling on the steps; "Ubaldo, dost thou hesitate?"

"I—I—swear,"—returned the youth, while damps as of death rolled down his pallid face, while every feature was convulsed with emotion, and

agitations

agitations strong and powerful shook his whole frame; "I swear, solemnly, to obey thy commands."

At that moment a loud clap of thunder shook the whole vault of heaven, as a blue flash of lightning shewed Ubaldo his mother in the agonies of death; her struggles were horrible, and, scarcely able to articulate, "Remember," she gave one hollow groan, and expired on the threshold of the villa di Albenza!!! Wretched, mistaken woman! had thy early days but experienced the fostering care of one kind and virtuous instructor, thou would'st have known that the indulgence of vicious pleasures leads but to destruction; that religion is the staff, without which we can never reach to happiness; that a patient resignation, under the storms of adversity, is the noblest

noblest triumph of the mind; and that forgiveness of injuries, and a requital of good for evil, is an emanation of the divinity within our hearts. From the body of his mother, the young Ubaldo was carried in the friendly arms of the sentinel (who chanced to pass his rounds just after Paulina had breathed her last,) to his charitable cottage, and there laid in a warm bed, soon recovered strength and composure; while some of the family of the Marchese, disturbed by the groans under their windows, hastened to the gate, to discover the cause. The remains were then conveyed into the house, where a locket she wore upon her bosom, and which had been given her by the Marchese, being taken to him, on his expressing a wish to know to whom she belonged, at once convinced him of the extent of his guilt,

and

and deprived him of peace for ever. Her being alone, however, in that deplorable condition, together with the advice and persuasions of the hard-hearted and avaricious Marchesa, to whom he now communicated his wish to protect her child, soon induced him to believe it had perished in infancy; while his wife, who, in her youth, had never imagined the conduct of her lover in the least reprehensible, for having merely seduced a low and simple girl, (for in that manner had the history of Paulina been related to her by her waiting-maid,) now basely contrived to deter her husband from doing justice to his unhappy and injured offspring.

Ubaldo, in the mean while, recovered in health, and supplied by his generous preserver with clothes and money,

money, quitted Naples and its environs, with his host, Francisco, for a distant part of the kingdom, where, for some time, they subsisted on the produce of their various and mutual labours; not long, however, could the daring and aspiring genius of Ubaldo lie dormant, disdaining a life of virtuous and humble industry; and as every year strengthened the remembrance of his oath, he bade adieu to his simple comrade, and, with a head full of plots, a heart thirsting for vengeance, and little or nothing in his pocket, set out on foot towards the city: there for some years he existed by those various impositions and atrocities too often practised in great cities with impunity and success. For a short period, too, he entered one of a lawless banditti, whose nightly depredations were the terror of the solitary

solitary traveller, and whose cruelties, indiscriminately exercised, at length induced the Legislature to use more than ordinary means for their apprehension. Among the few that escaped the justice of their country, was Ubaldo, who had sought in every benighted passenger for his father; and who, being foiled by his death, of his projected vengeance, soon laid hold of the young and dissipated Moraldi as his prey, not only marking him for his revenge, but making him, in every instance, subservient to his interest; and while he not only beheld him with the eyes of early and hereditary hatred, he viewed him also as the favoured lover of the woman he preferred, and as one who also inwardly hated and detested himself. On him, therefore, on his children, and on his children's children, would he have gladly executed

cuted the most diabolical revenge; a thousand times it was in his power to have taken his life, but that was, as he himself declared, mercy, in comparison to the gradual progressive misery, to which he had condemned him, and of which he at last sunk the victim.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

"Oh! 'tis a dreadful interval of time,
Filled up with horror all, and big with death!"
ADDISON.

FROM the time of Ubaldo's condemnation, his only request had been, that the period of his fate might be expedited as much as possible. On his trial he had pleaded guilty to the murder of the Marchese; and on being asked by the Grand Inquisition, whether he had no witnesses to call, no defence to set up, he bade them seek in the bloody grave of Morano for the best witness of an act he gloried in, and in the injuries of his mother for his defence.

"BEAR

"BEAR him to his cell!" exclaimed the Judge, as he turned with wonder from so intrepid a spirit, and something like compassion, that it had been applied to ends so base and so ignoble.

LEFT to the dreary solitude of his dungeon, reflection had now its range; and while his unequal footsteps measured the narrow boundary of his prison, his thoughts extended to the space before him. Memory represented the past, and Conscience pictured the future. Did Ubaldo fear? No; that was a sensation, Nature, when she moulded him into being, had disdained to infuse: Did he hope? No; the rude breath of adverse circumstance had nipt its earliest blossoms, and despair, stern callous despair, now barred its entrance. He was about to die, and the morrow's dawn would behold

hold him, exposed to all the insults of a licentious rabble, perishing on the scaffold; those strong nerved sinews, and those mighty limbs, whose every action seemed to burst with strength and energy, spent, waste, and powerless, with pangs contracted, and with wounds all scarred; and that mind, so vast, so comprehensive, all soon would be as nothing!!

"AYE, but will that be?" exclaimed Ubaldo, as his eye rested on the brilliant moon; "If there's no power above, then what is Nature? and whence those passions which have been my ruin?"——He paused for some moments in silent contemplation, then moved from the window, and trimming his lamp, began to read. It was a book of religious consolation, a book from which his clear and manly tone,

his grand delivery, had often drawn forth sentiments of virtue; of virtue his practice had belied, of religion his heart had cavilled at. The passing bell tolled one; Ubaldo started, and something like emotion crost his bosom: another hour—and another—still found him doubting and bewildered. Again he had recourse to the book; malice was denounced, revenge execrated; and the comfort it afforded, one he knew not how to taste. Again the warning bell beat slow and heavy; he would have prayed, to what—to whom? "To God!" he exclaimed, starting from his seat; "there is, there must be one! I feel it here! here, on my soul, the blackened truth's recorded, and I can doubt no longer!"—— Now he thought upon his mother; now he deprecated in bitterness the name of his father: "And will there

not

not still be thousands," he continued, "brought into life, blasted with existence, and doomed, like me, to curse licentious parents? Oh! but for that, I had been good, been happy! Nature blest me, though every virtuous property of mind was blighted in the ruin they bequeathed. Man! man! look here, and tremble! And thou, poor giddy fool, who boasts thy exploits, and vainly draws a petty consequence from shameless actions, think of the horrors which await thy crimes; and when the thoughtless circle shall applaud thy boasted triumphs over helpless innocence, think of thy guilty, thy deserted offspring, and despair of mercy, of forgiveness! And thou, too, haughty woman, who shalt pass with scorn thy frail and erring sister, let comparison teach thee mercy; and let the bounty of fortune, which has rais-

ed thee above want, or the dignity of mind which has preserved thee in temptation, melt thy heart to charity, and open thy bosom to the wandering penitent."

VIEW him now, about to make the last atonement for his crimes; view him now, gazing unmoved, undaunted upon the dreadful wheel which was soon to tear his every muscle. From the time of his seizure, his person had been searched, and every care taken to prevent his obtaining any instrument of destruction; but this precaution had been useless; for his mind, once more wound up to its accustomed pitch of hardness, he rather gloried in a death which gave public testimony to the cause for which he suffered: with a step firm and steady he ascended the scaffold, without the smallest transition

sition of countenance, exchanged his own garment for the more convenient one presented him by the executioner; and while standing to be bound, he calmly surveyed the immense crowd who were assembled to witness his end. His pangs were long and excruciating; once, and once only, a slight convulsion past his features; and though the sweat of agony bedewed his face, though every sinew was stretched in torture, and every vein writhing under feelings inexpressible, his proud, enduring nature, disdained to supplicate; he knew he was to die, and he resolved to die as he had lived, bold, fearless, and determined. In the last awful moment, when death sat quivering on his lips, when his dim eyes were closing, and his disfigured and distorted person scarcely disclosed a trace of what he had been, a faint and murmuring sound

issued from his tongue: "My mother!" he cried, "thou art revenged! My mother"——He could no more; another stroke from the executioner cut it off for ever. A dead silence reigned over all; horror filled the mind of every spectator: the mother caught her infant to her breast, while the father, looking anxiously towards his youthful son, bade him "remember the Eve of San Pietro." Long did it remain engraven on the hearts of that house it had so materially affected: Viola wept over the misfortunes of her mother, as the sigh of pity and regret daily filled her petition to Heaven for the forgiveness of her father's offences, while as the beloved and cherished wife of the amiable Albenza, she dedicated her own days to the practice of every virtue, and in the affection and happiness of her Lord, soon found a reward

for

for all her past sufferings: never for a moment did she forget the example or instructions of her early protectress, nor ever, in the hour of prosperity, did the Marchesa di Albenza cease to remember and fulfil those precepts which had supported the humble Viola under the trials of adversity. Many years did the excellent Bertoldo witness the felicity of his son; and though the tear of retrospection would oftentimes bedew his cheek to the recollection of his brother, though the unfortunate Lorenzo would cross his mind, and a thought of bitterness obtrude with the idea of Ubaldo; yet when he gazed upon his darling son, and in the opening promise of his infant family, beheld all their parents' virtues renewed, he raised his eyes to Heaven in a transport of joy and gratitude; and when the final summons called him

hence to join his still adored Antonia in a better world, he sunk into eternity, as doth the soft and gentle Eve of summer fall on the breast of night. With every mark of respect and honour was the body of Lorenzo interred in the cemetery of the Convent, and masses said for the repose of his soul and that of his guilty parent. Corvino, whose repentance had been as sincere as it was beneficial, obtained his pardon through the medium of the Marchese di Albenza, on condition that he became a member of a severe religious fraternity, and devoted the remainder of his days to penitence and prayer. The good old Bianca was soon restored to her former situation as housekeeper in the castle; while Bernardo, the infamous steward and tool of Morano, shortly after engaging in a band of lawless

lawless freebooters, was seized with a large party of his companions, and suffered a public and disgraceful death. The good Marquis de Volange, on appealing to the Court of France, and bringing evidence of the treachery of Montebino, and of his own name and rank, was restored to his title and estates; while blest in the society of his niece, and her excellent Lord, he soon found a period to his sorrows, and a recompence for all his former misfortunes.

On the same spot where the first meeting between Moraldi and Ubaldo had taken place, was the body of the latter interred.

The Pilgrim never past it without a prayer, the Traveller without a shudder,

der, while the tear of the Moralist oft-times moistened the weed upon his grave, as it fell for the errors of mankind.

FINIS.

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